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NEW NERVES FOR OLD



NEW NERVES FOR OLD

“BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW”

BY
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TO

Annie Payson Call

HEALTH

WHEN souls are sick,
From no mere health of body can there
 flow
 In them the needful leaven;
But truth and love and useful work be-
 stow
 The happy health of heaven.

Both love and hate
Cannot dwell always in one soul, nor
 may
 The power of heaven and hell;
So hate and hell must flee some blessed
 day —
 Then will the soul be well.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT	11
III. THE TRAINING OF THE WILL	40
IV. NON - RESISTANCE	77
V. BALANCE	102
VI. THE POWER OF HABIT	117
VII. APPEARANCES AND REALITY	128
VIII. STAGNATION AND LIFE	142
IX. NERVES AND CIVILIZATION	156
X. SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT	166
XI. CHASTITY	177
XII. SPIRITUAL MANHOOD	189
XIII. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE	214
XIV. THE SPIRITUAL WORLD	228
XV. GENUINE LOVE	243
XVI. SUMMING UP	255
APPENDIX	263

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

CHAPTER I

Introduction

AS sick nerves seem to be the great American disease, and as there exists still so much misunderstanding about them among people in general, and so superficial an understanding of them in the medical profession, it seems obvious that anything that has proved useful in their relief or cure should be put within the reach of sufferers. This is all the more so because, of all diseases, it appears to be the one which is most affected by the mental

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and moral attitude of the patient himself and least under the direct influence of external remedies.

The following suggestions and reflections are made without any claim to scientific authority or to anything like a complete knowledge of the subject, but as a result of long experience with the actual facts and conditions of nervous suffering, and long and careful observation of the practical effects of certain working principles in dealing with them.

There are many people whose lives are heavily burdened in this way without their knowing in the least what is at the root of their troubles. Their sufferings, moreover, are often complicated and increased by the fact that they do not distinguish between the symptoms which

INTRODUCTION

are beyond their control and those for which they are morally responsible. The consequence is — in the case of conscientious people — that a sense of self-reproach is often added to the nervous suffering, which is increased by the innocent brutality of unintelligent and well-meaning friends, and which puts an unfair and terrible weapon into the hands of the malicious and the prejudiced. It is hard to imagine a more difficult position than that of a sufferer without the strength required to do what he considers his duty, blaming himself ignorantly for his very weakness and suffering, making obvious mistakes which diminish his efficiency and alienate his friends, and frequently preserving all through this the outward appearance of ordinary health. Under such circumstances, considering

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

the common frailty of human nature, it is not strange that the weakness of self-pity frequently appears to undermine still further the reserves of moral strength.

To the writer it seems that there is a deeper significance in such experiences than appears on the surface, and that they are full of possibilities of a new kind of strength, wisdom, and character, different and more lasting than falls to the lot of people in the ordinary experiences of life.

The peculiarity of the ordeal lies in its helplessness. Most trials — even of the tragic kind — bring with them a certain sense of strength when they are faced and borne with endurance and determination. But in these nervous trials the very root of the trouble seems to lie in the loss of

INTRODUCTION

power to endure and in the sense that the ordinary underpinnings of life are giving way. Our abilities — that we felt proud of, — our physical strength, our social position, our wealth, — all these things bring us no comfort; and the old consolations of friendship are frequently impaired by misunderstandings and the inability to unburden our hearts for fear that we may lose all self-control, and with it the remnants of our self-respect. But this dread, too, has in many cases to be realized, and we break down utterly, without the least remaining shadow of pride or dignity.

Despair is the temptation that besets the sufferer at this stage; but, if he can be surrounded by the right kind of moral atmosphere, it may prove, when conquered, the very best preparation for a

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

genuine trust in God; and, if he can seek and find that simple and ancient remedy for human ills (so unfashionable now in the midst of religious conventionality and scientific complacency), he will have found a key which will unlock door after door, — leading finally to the great out-of-doors where the human consciousness, having thrown away the dross of self and the cheap trappings of pride, will feel itself honored only by the fact of being a child of God and a brother and companion of all his creatures. Here dependence upon a divine Father becomes a joy and strength never before dreamed of, and here we begin to recognize also that our individual weakness is but a partial revelation of the universal human weakness, which is only glossed over by the false starch of pride and

INTRODUCTION

pretense, and ultimately leaves us helpless whenever the inevitable failure of physical strength appears, unless we have laid hold of a higher strength than our own.

The consciousness of our helplessness, then, makes it possible for us to receive the guidance which all men need, — the daily supply of light and warmth, through the “Spirit of Truth,” of penitence, and trust in God; and we begin to appreciate what Jesus meant when he said that we must all become “as little children.”

This interpretation of the experiences of nervous suffering, when it is understood and finally accepted as self-evident, forms the only true basis for permanent cure. But it is because the cure itself has become a matter of secondary im-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

portance. We have learnt that our sufferings are capable of teaching us lessons infinitely more valuable than the mere well-being of physical health, and therefore we no longer resist them — we accept them with the utmost degree of willingness of which we are capable, praying always that we may become more willing as time goes on; and by this growing willingness of the spirit the strain of nervous tension is eased and the suffering itself is diminished.

Thus relief comes not only as a blessing in itself, when the end of pain has been accomplished, but as part of a far greater blessing in a deeper understanding and appreciation of life. We have changed our point of view from that of a suffering individual, whose strength and vitality have been taken away from him,

INTRODUCTION

to that of an individual who shares in the strength of a larger life than his own which he knows can never be taken away so long as he does his duty as a part of the whole — remembering his true function as a servant and beneficiary, gratefully receiving and enjoying his blessings, but renouncing the false responsibilities of self-importance and never claiming anything for self.

In the succeeding pages I will try to show that a false and ignorant point of view is at the root of many forms of nervous suffering, and that it can be cured in most cases by a careful study and application of the principles which are necessary to support a wholesome, humble, and happy attitude toward life, when it is gratefully accepted as a gift from the “Father of lights, in whom is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

no variableness nor shadow of turning.”

All the chapters following the next one are given up to various aspects of life affecting nervous strain from a somewhat broader point of view, and it is believed that their connection with the struggles and victories of nervous suffering are sufficiently obvious to require no explanation.

But it is necessary to consider the fact that the disease — whatever its ultimate cause — has distinctly physical symptoms which should be met with physical remedies, — not in the form of drugs or external stimulation, but (in addition to proper rest and nourishment) in the form of physical relaxation.

CHAPTER II

Body, Mind, and Spirit

THE immediate and visible condition of nervous suffering is abnormal strain or tension of the nerves and muscles. A little observation will reveal the fact that what we call “nervous motions” are jerky movements resulting from abnormal contraction. A sudden fright may automatically produce a contraction of the muscles and nerves in the region of the stomach, or, it may be, throughout the whole body, and in consequence we draw in our breath quickly and spasmodically. Any unexpected mental shock will often pro-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

duce contractions of this kind and thus impede the normal circulation. This, of course, is a physical effect from a mental cause.

At first these contractions seem to follow immediately upon some corresponding mental impulse, such as fear, anxiety or over-intense desire and effort; and, when such mental impulses occur very frequently, a *habit* of contraction of the muscles and nerves becomes established, until in the end the nervous and muscular contraction becomes chronic and a permanent state of inferior circulation is induced. This habit of physical contraction is accompanied by a corresponding mental condition in which the sensations of fear, over-intensity, etc., remain, as it were, locked up and ready to make their appearance whenever occasion pre-

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

sents itself. The physical contraction accompanies mental states of depression and exhaustion, and forms — so to speak — a thick wall or crust of dryness which keeps the natural energy of the nerves imprisoned, so that they no longer react — except heavily and with great difficulty — to the demands of the will. The fight of the will against this imprisoning wall — without the knowledge of how to loosen and relax the bonds of contraction — is a discouraging, uphill struggle in which many sufferers are engaged, and in which strain and effort lead to greater and greater exhaustion with a corresponding increase of discouragement.

To learn how to relax these bonds of contraction and the abnormal tension of nerves and muscles systematically and persistently is the first step in the prac-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tical cure of nervous disorder when it exists without any organic disease; and, even in the presence of organic disease, nervous suffering may thus be much softened though not wholly cured. Fear of a disease or annoyance at its presence may contract the body so that the circulation may be seriously impeded and the healing power of nature be proportionately interfered with. People sometimes suffer from severe colds for weeks when they might have recovered from them in days, or almost in as many hours, if they had dropped their nervous resistances and consequently their contractions. An instance of the effect of such resistances and contractions is that of a young woman who kept herself nervously ill for years by constantly surrendering to a bitter discontent at not being physically strong,

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

and by thus exhausting the strength she had, instead of using it in sensible and helpful ways. One peculiarity of this unhappy patient was that, although she professed to believe in religion, she refused to humble herself sufficiently to pray. This was the result of an inherited pride which added much to the strain of her condition.

In contrast to this it may be interesting to cite the case of another person who, by forming the habit of patience and non-resistance, succeeded through a period of years — in spite of intense and prolonged sufferings — in doing a great deal of useful work and ultimately leading a deeply happy life. In this case the habit of prayer was an essential factor of the cure, and the cure itself resulted in what seemed a transformation of character.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

In all such cases and many others the beginning of relief can be found through an intelligent effort to drop the physical contractions. This habit of relaxation can be brought about by practising regular, rhythmical exercises in deep breathing, by exercises to loosen the contractions which produce the familiar sharp and dry quality of a nervous voice, and by exercises which counteract the contractions existing in the arms, legs, neck, and back,—and, in fact, in every part of the body. But the difficulty is that to practise these exercises, concentration is necessary; and, in such states of nervous tension, the effort to concentrate is always associated with special intensity and contraction of the nerves; so that, when the habit of contraction is voluntarily abandoned, it seems at first im-

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

possible to make any strong effort, and an entirely new habit must be formed which associates the strongest concentration with patient loosening from contraction, and with a quiet, unintense activity of mind.

It is this morbid association of concentrated effort with contraction of the nerves that makes the struggle of the will against the imprisoning wall of habitual and rigid tension so hopeless without intelligent and sympathetic instruction. For, without the knowledge of how to relax the muscles and nerves, every effort of the will exerted to counteract the paralyzing effect of nervous tension increases the tension itself by the contraction of the nerves with which each effort is accompanied.

For instance, a young man who was a

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

good tennis player and had a strong physique was gradually overtaken by nervous suffering as a result of worries which he did not know how to control. To his companions he seemed merely self-absorbed, and his morbid peculiarities were ridiculed with a certain amount of contempt. His friends would urge him to play tennis, and, with the idea that he must distract himself and think of other people, he would assent and play set after set without great apparent weakness, but with the greatest subsequent exhaustion. His effort forcibly to separate his mind from his suffering led him into deeper suffering, and the strained exercise of his will appeared to make it weaker than it was before.

It is a vicious circle from which the effort to escape through blind and ex-

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

hausting struggle leads to ever-increasing weakness and a further closing in of the prison walls; but, as the patient gradually learns, by quiet and persistent practice, to relax his tense muscles and nerves, the old association of effort with over-intensity gives way to a new association, — that of concentration with physical relaxation and gentleness. With this new habit of quiet physical motion, unaccompanied by the old intensity and rigidity, the relief and comfort of a freer circulation begins to be felt; and this, of course, brings encouragement and hope.

A number of physical exercises to remove the strain of nerves have been designed in well-proportioned series, an account of which will be found in the appendix; but, if the principle under-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

lying them is properly grasped, any intelligent person can invent others which will have a beneficial effect. The main object of them is two-fold: first, as has been said, to relieve the sufferer from the pressure of physical contraction and strain; and secondly, — as a consequence of this — to uncover the mental causes of strain — such as fear, anger, jealousy, vanity, unyielding grief, — in connection with specific facts, which will be found to underlie them. It is interesting to know that, so long as a patient is in the thralldom of physical contraction, it is difficult for him to see clearly or to understand intelligently the mental or spiritual causes which are at the root of his suffering; but, when the weight of physical contraction has begun to yield, the mental sufferings come up to the

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

consciousness with greater clearness and can therefore be dealt with more effectively.

But the practice of these exercises often reveals a great lack of the power of concentration in the patient. After the first interest of novelty has worn off, a certain degree of persistence is required to go through them with the right amount of attention and care, and a lack of patience and persistence reveals weakness existing in the concentrating power of the will. It is most natural that, when the nervous system has formed habits of contraction in the effort to react against impulses of fear or anger, it should be difficult and disagreeable for the nerves to reverse the process which has become habitual to them, and to accept new habits of the opposite kind — habits of

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

gentle, and steady, and continuous motion — in their place. The force of habit is, as we all know, one of the strongest factors we have to deal with in human life; and, in the case of hyper-sensitive nerves, it is particularly trying to reverse and change old physical habits even when they are the cause of suffering.

Thus it will be seen that the training of nerves and muscles out of states of abnormal contraction involves the training of the will in patience and concentration, in order to teach the new lesson that concentration is more vigorous and effective when accompanied by quietness and persistence, than it is when joined with spasmodic intensity. If exercises in relaxation were to be done purely mechanically and without the active, willing coöperation of the patient himself, they

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

would not result in any change of habit in the nerves. The old habit would reassert itself as soon as the exercise was finished, and the muscles and nerves would slip back into their accustomed contractions with the same ease as that with which a rubber band shrinks into its original size when tension is removed. The exercises, to be curative, must draw out the coöperation of both intelligence and will, and must train both the mind and the body to work in conformity with a new standard of quiet, continuous, and vigorous motion.

In learning to acquire the new power of concentration necessary to form these habits of freedom from strain, all sorts of difficulties present themselves, which must, one by one, be overcome. All sorts of plausible reasons and excuses arise, —

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

reasons for not persisting in the course already chosen, and excuses to explain away the weakness of will — the self-indulgence — which shrinks from the drudgery of monotonous perseverance. Thus the process of cure by relaxation becomes more and more a matter of strengthening the will, or character, or spirit; and establishing, through strong concentration, its normal command over the body; and less and less a mere matter of relaxing physical strain alone. The deeper we get into the work of cure, after beginning with the physical symptoms of muscular and nervous contraction, the more our attention becomes directed toward the training of the *will*, which, with the power of thinking, forms what we call our character.

This fact is further emphasized by the

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

effect, already mentioned, of physical relaxation upon the mind. The nervous contractions which, by gradual accumulation, form permanent habits of strain and rigidity, spring from spontaneous but weak impulses of the will to protect itself from the effects of painful or violent emotion. Granted the presence of such a degree of fear or anger, for instance, in a young, ignorant, inexperienced, and at the same time sensitive person, the impulse to contract the nerves and muscles of the body is an instinctive effort to put on the brakes and to set up a barrier against an emotion which might otherwise be overwhelming and humiliating. The contractions are the result of an undeveloped and ignorant instinct of self-preservation against the obvious and painful effects of unre-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

strained emotion, — and the fatigue and strain which is caused by these contractions, when they become habitual, is due to the fact that the inhibiting power of the will upon which we rely to put on the brakes is too feeble to control the emotion. Unless the inhibiting power of the will can be strengthened and enabled to work without any nervous and muscular contraction, the result of such a condition must inevitably be a further weakening of the power of inhibition until the brakes wear out and the unrestrained emotions overflow the bounds of proper balance and reserve. Such an absence of self-control as this is characteristic of states of nervous breakdown, and it represents the normal process of nature in its striving for readjustment and health. For the breaking down of the nerves,

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

although accompanied with great suffering, affords an opportunity of rest which was impossible, either by night or by day, so long as they were in a state of chronic tension with no way open toward relaxation and the softening of the physical strain.

The opportunity to relax and rest which nature gives to a strained and suffering patient through the more or less violent crises of nervous breakdown may be provided in a more gradual, regular, and gentle manner through the relaxing exercises above mentioned. But it must be observed that, when the habit of putting on the brakes in emotional excitement by contractions of the nerves is given up, there must intervene a time and state of comparative helplessness before a new and deeper habit of self-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

control — based upon intelligence, and will, and love of principle — has been established. It will be seen that, if the cure is to be thorough and permanent, it is necessary that the superficial inhibition of spasmodic contraction should be discarded, and that a new and stronger habit of inhibition should take its place in the deeper region of the intelligence and will.

This means, of course, that the new habit must form part of the character itself, and must be based upon a conviction of the truth of moral or spiritual law; and that the impulses of fear, anger, or resentment, which hitherto have been met with nervous resistance, shrinking, or other forms of contraction, must now be met, without excitement or contractions of any kind, as temptations to sin,

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

as ugly weaknesses of character springing from self-love.

In some cases such a degree of character undoubtedly exists, in the same person, alongside of contraction and strain, and the difficulty is principally that of the patient's ignorance of the nature of his trouble and of the forces at his command. In such cases the old shallow habits of contraction can be cast off like heavy outer garments or encumbering chains, leaving the character and the spirit free to assert its normal power and dignity in self-control, while, at the same time, relieving the nerves. But in many other cases, and especially among the young or inexperienced, there is no such underlying character already formed; and, in these cases, the cure of sick nerves involves nothing less than a train-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

ing in character, or a re-education of the heart and mind in accordance with the fundamental laws of life.

While, by the exercises, the old habits of physical contraction are being undermined, the nerves relaxed, and the will trained in quiet concentration, the mental causes of strain in the past, many of which may be lying forgotten, or half-forgotten, in the subconscious mind, will be brought under review; and these may be removed in retrospect by the frank acknowledgment of the moral or mental weakness which originally caused the strain, and by seizing the first opportunity to act from a different spirit, with humble confidence in a higher power than our own. Such moral or mental weakness need not, of course, imply guilt, for it may be caused by hereditary tend-

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

ency; but it nevertheless is an antecedent cause, without which the original mental shock, or series of shocks, need not have resulted in strain. No matter how great the shock, the calamity, or the overwork in connection with which the strain was originally brought to light, it is inconceivable that its effect could not have been sufficiently softened or modified to prevent strain, if the mental attitude of the patient had been softened and controlled by a sufficient degree of wise patience and gentle non-resistance.

It is not an uncommon experience for a person who is quietly doing the relaxing exercises to break out in a burst of irritability or anger; and, as the words rush out of his mouth, you find that he is talking of something which happened months — perhaps years — ago. The

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

best help is given then by encouraging him to let it out until he has relieved the repressed feeling, helping him to face the whole thing squarely, to drop the resistance to it, and then get rid of it forever. A burst of grief is equally — perhaps more — common, especially in women, and should be met in the same way.

“Forget it, forget it,” is the usual expression regarding a painful experience, but *you cannot forget it*. If you think you have forgotten it, you have only pushed it into the background of your brain, and it is sure to reappear some time or other with stubborn insistence. Only by facing it first in the right spirit can we learn to drop it cleanly, and so find permanent relief.

Sensitive people are often tormented

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

by the sufferings of their vanity or self-consciousness in retrospect; and, in the case of nervous disease, these resuscitations of old mistakes and humiliations frequently take possession of the brain and reduce it for the time to stagnant impotence. It is a difficult and delicate task to arouse both the intelligence and the will to meet the necessities of such a situation. It requires that we should accept the fact that we have made fools of ourselves, or even worse, not with the artificial laughter of self-ridicule which only covers up the shame, but with the simple and genuine recognition that what concerns our vanity alone cannot possibly be of any lasting consequence. This, we find, is only a view from another angle of the truth that self-love is at the bottom of all nervous suffering, and that we

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

only truly begin to live wholesomely as the self begins to die.

It is likely that harmful and foolish suggestions made to children, when they are very young, may develop tendencies to similar follies on a larger scale when they have grown up. A man in middle life, for instance, remembered his suffering as a child from the presence of a mole upon his body of which some vulgar person, whom he had forgotten, had taught him to be ashamed. Many instances could be brought up of apparently trivial experiences which conveyed a subtle poison, to lie dormant in the subconscious mind and ultimately assert itself in various painful forms. Other experiences which are not trivial are often pushed into the background of the mind and seem forgotten for years until they

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

are brought to the surface of the consciousness by the “opening up” effect of relaxation.

Thus by the “opening up” of the book of his past experience, the patient gains the opportunity of revising his past life, recognizing his mistakes, and correcting his judgments; and, by this process, the psychological burdens of unfortunate life-histories are often much lightened or entirely removed. Hence the process of cure, which originally began with the effort to counteract the external symptoms of physical contraction in the muscles and nerves, is extended to a deeper field of action in the spiritual consciousness — the profounder region of the heart and mind where considerations of conscience hold the place of first importance, and where a clear,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

reasonable, and healthy conscience is necessary to contentment.

But the very use of the words “spiritual consciousness” implies that we recognize a spiritual cause behind the phenomena of conscience and character; — and so we are led, finally, to a recognition, first, of spiritual law as the basis of character; secondly, to a recognition of the necessity of acknowledging our mistakes in the past and present; and, thirdly, to the necessity of relaxing all the physical contractions of the nerves. This is the order of cause and effect, — the original difficulty being in weakness of character, either personal or inherited, leading to moral errors or mistakes of judgment, and, finally, to physical lack of balance and weakness; but the reverse order is that in which a

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

cure would, in most cases, be wisely approached: the loosening of the contractions of the body, the acknowledgment and correction of mistakes and false judgments, and the recognition of spiritual responsibility as the fundamental obligation of life. In other words, *we begin with relieving the body, and go on to repentance and trust in God.*

Under no other circumstances can we appreciate more forcibly the wisdom of the old proverb: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," than in those of nervous suffering and cure. It cannot be urged too strongly that the one essential in such treatment as is described here (apart from the patient himself) is an atmosphere of warm and yet impersonal affection in the physician or friend in charge. The elements of cure lie deeper

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

than the utmost skill of science or of any mere intellectual ingenuity; they must include an atmosphere of companionship and wholesome sympathy in making all the necessary sacrifices of self which are demanded in the cleansing of the mind. But it is not necessary that the sick should be cared for by the sick alone to bring about this curative and encouraging influence. We shall find that the necessity for giving up the demands of self-love and exaggerated self-importance, which the cure of nerves demands, leads to a recognition of this same necessity as a universal principle — for both sick and well; but the animal spirits of health and the natural pride of well-being act as a screen, until sympathy and discernment have shown us our true relation to life and the meaning of its laws.

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

The delicacy of the task calls for practical reverence in dissociating inevitable weaknesses from a fellow man or woman, and so not confirming or emphasizing the mental rubbish which is being cast off by a struggling soul. The strength of it calls for loyalty to principle, when our natural sympathies tend to weak excuses and a glossing over of the truth, which can only bring more confusion in the end. Hence, when it is our privilege to lead a fellow wayfarer toward the light to which his eyes are not yet accustomed, our first demand upon ourselves should be that we keep our own hearts in union with the *realities* of life and not with its mere appearances, sensations, or conventionalities.

CHAPTER III

The Training of the Will

THE will, as the seat of our affections, is the most important element of our being. It is the essence of the man himself, and therefore, in all kinds of human service, it should logically be given an important place. In schools, in churches, in hospitals, especially in hospitals for the insane, in reformatories and prisons, wherever we try to benefit our brothers and sisters in methodical ways, one would think that the education and training of the will would be the first subject of scientific study and loving effort. For the training

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

of the will means the building up of character, and character underlies everything that is most useful, beautiful, and joyful in human life.

But, as a matter of fact, we do not find the training of the will scientifically systematized as we do the training of the intellect. It is unnecessary to point out the high state of development attained by educational science throughout the civilized world; but when we use the word "education," we are apt to mean too much the training of the intellect alone. Even in our churches and Sunday-schools, where the influences exercised are intended to appeal to the heart as well as to the mind, there is little or nothing done, so far as can be generally seen, actually to train the will. Even the necessity or desirability for such training

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

is very largely unknown or ignored until some acute crisis occurs in which it is obvious that nothing but an increased power in the will can save a man from disaster. Even then, how helpless we are! We find ourselves trying to befriend a poor drunkard; we know that nothing can help him but increased power in his own will. Again and again we turn away because we do not know how to help him. We say: "Poor fellow, he is weak! It is a disease! We must not condemn him!" And then we leave him to his fate.

Is there then no hope for a weak will? Is there no way of obeying the command of divine compassion to "bind up the broken-hearted"? For what is a broken heart but a heart that has lost the power of its love, a will that has succumbed and become subservient to its grief? Is there

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

no way in which we can teach our brother to train his own will?

If we turn to modern science, we find its answer perfectly clear and entirely negative. I was much interested not long ago to hear what Professor Janet, the distinguished French psychologist, had to say about psycho-therapeutics or mental healing by means of hypnotism. He spoke, among other things, of the cure of drunkenness and of diseases comprised under the head of what is called "hysteria," a condition very frequently accompanied by weakness of the will. But his attempt at cure was invariably made by the operation of his own will upon the patient's subconscious mind, without the coöperation or even consciousness of the patient himself. He puts the patient into a hypnotic trance

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

in which his normal consciousness is suspended and what is known as his subconsciousness becomes amenable to suggestion. In this state the patient is told that he really does not like liquor, or whatever the suggestion may be, and, on awaking from his abnormal state, he finds his morbid appetite diminished, and under continuous treatment, it has in very many cases been entirely removed; not, however, in such a way as to render the patient independent of the treatment; for, as Professor Janet admits, the patient becomes more and more, instead of less and less, dependent upon the suggestions of the operator. In a normal man his baser appetites are under the control of his own will; and, indeed, the principal way in which he at first becomes conscious of his higher nature is by the

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

combats through which the lower is subdued. Moreover, his higher nature cannot assert itself victoriously without the endurance of suffering; and, by the patient and willing endurance of suffering, the good affections of his will are sweetened and strengthened, and his baser appetites are overcome. In the hypnotic treatment none of this discipline exists, for the patient has, in his waking state, no consciousness and no memory of the suggestions he has received. He has no suffering, no effort, and no victory; and it is not surprising that, even when apparently cured, he should be unable to stand alone. Professor Janet disclaims any moral influence over his patients.

Although this method, which is entirely in harmony with modern material-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

ism, while supplanting the normal action of the will, does not even pretend to cure or strengthen the will itself, it is instructive as showing us its dry mechanism, according to modern psychology. It does not concern itself with the motive power, as we may call the moral or spiritual force from which the will must derive its vitality; but it does reveal, in a general way, the manner in which the will, when alive and guided by true principles, may affect and change the habits, character, and even in some cases the physical ailments of the man. The center of this mechanism is what is called the subconsciousness or the subliminal consciousness, a state of intelligence within us of which we are not normally conscious at all, and which is revealed in the conditions known under the general

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

head of hypnotic trance. This subconscious mind is the medium which accepts the suggestions of the hypnotic operator, and through which these suggestions produce their effect upon the conscious mind, and even the physical states of the subject. It is through the subconscious mind that both mental and physical cures are effected. When received directly into this subconscious mind ideas are developed into working efficiency and produce practical results; whereas, if they were merely addressed to the ordinary consciousness, they would meet with resistance and produce no results whatever. But even Professor Janet acknowledges that by hard work and persistent effort, — that is, of course, by the active exercise of the will, — we can produce effects in ourselves similar to those

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

produced upon patients in the hypnotic trance.

It is very difficult, because it involves the change of habits, and habits are ideas and affections already established in the subconscious mind by inheritance or frequently repeated action of the will. If such established habits need to be changed, the will must make a strong effort and continue that effort persistently in order to make the change permanent. At first the necessary effort is so severe that it must be sometimes even painful; and, when the effort has ceased to be painful, it means that the new suggestion has been accepted by the subconscious mind; when the effort has ceased to be fatiguing, it means that it has begun to develop strength in the subconscious mind; and, when it has become

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

so easy as to be almost automatic, it means that the subconscious mind has fully accepted the suggestions and authority of the will. A strong will, then, if we adopt for a moment the terms of modern psychology, means a will which has established its own supremacy over its subconscious mind, and can make its suggestions in such a way that they are readily accepted and carried out. It has established its own ideas in the subconscious mind so that there is no effective opposition to them, and it is not afraid of outside suggestions against its own. A weak will, on the other hand, is one which lacks the authority over the subconscious mind necessary to efficiency. The subconscious mind may be stored with habits of thought or feeling of which the will disapproves, but not strong enough to

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

expel these undesirable thoughts and to suggest new and better ones. In such a case the will is weak and unstable because the house is divided against itself.

When it is said that a strong will is one which exercises full and efficient control over the subconsciousness, it must be understood that strong here means only externally or naturally strong. For an evil will could establish evil habits in the subconsciousness so completely as to produce a harmony of action which would be entirely stable, consistent, and efficient for evil ends.

When, however, we speak of the training of the will we mean training of a spiritual kind, the training that builds up character.

If weakness of the will is the result of

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

the opposition of evil habits in the inner places of the mind, the training of the will must be such as to enable it to clear out those evil habits and so receive from the living Spirit opposite good habits to take their place. Thus, for every evil habit in the subconscious mind which is removed, there will be a good habit of vigorous effort established, and thus the subconsciousness may be won over entirely to the good will of the conscious mind, and the whole man become homogeneous and strong.

It is necessary, at this point, to draw a clear distinction between a genuinely strong will and one which only has the appearance of strength; and we shall find that this distinction corresponds to that between spiritual and natural good. This is all the more necessary because

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

the training which would produce a strong natural will is very different from that which would produce a strong spiritual will; and, indeed, a strong natural will must be weakened before the spiritual will can begin to grow in strength at all. The natural will is, of course, that which derives its strength from love of self and of the world, and the spiritual will is that which derives its strength from the love of overcoming self.

The meaning of the love of self is plain enough to us all because our own selfishness is with us every day; and, even when we do not recognize our own, there is plenty of selfishness in those around us to teach us what it means to live from the love of self. In the same way, it is comparatively easy to understand what the love of the world is; for we do not need

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

to have advanced far in self-knowledge to realize how uninteresting most of our work would be, if we were to receive no credit for it, no recognition from any human source whatever. But when it comes to understanding the meaning of a life from actual love to God and to the neighbor, our practical sources of instruction from direct example are very few. If we eliminate the theological, sentimental, or emotional conceptions, none of which in themselves have any spiritual life in them whatever, we shall find that there is only just one way of finding out the meaning of love to God, and that is the practical shunning of selfishness as sin against him; for the willingness to give up what is precious to one's self for his sake is the only practical test of love to God. Assuming

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

then that we are all born into the love of self and of the world, and that it is our Father's will that we should be born again into the opposite love of himself and of the neighbor, it becomes clear that the spiritual will is that which is best adapted to coöperate with God's will in effecting this change.

There are three stages to be regarded in the training of the will, which, although they may be described in successive order, must be practised all together, or as the occasion demands, for they are all three different forms of the same activity. The first is the acquirement of self-knowledge, both in the subconscious and the conscious mind. This means that we must become conscious of the evils in our subconscious mind, as well as those which we already recognize.

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

The second is the use of the interior will in prayer and repentance. And the third is the carrying out of the results in active life. Thus new habits are formed in the subconsciousness, and a new individuality from the living Spirit begins to exist.

Regarded from the natural point of view, strength of will is tested by its capacity for carrying out the objects of its ambition, for overcoming obstacles, and for maintaining a certain stability and poise which gives the appearance of strength; but, when regarded from the spiritual point of view, we shall find that this pleasing appearance will in many cases have to be sacrificed in estimating strength of will. If the first element of spiritual strength is true self-knowledge, and the capacity for acting upon that self-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

knowledge, a certain fluctuation of the consciousness must sometimes be necessary to the exercise of strength of will, and this fluctuation may often, in the course of spiritual growth, exceed the limits of stability and poise. The voluntary renunciation of the natural will must, in the beginning, be more or less spasmodic and irregular, until the interior will has had its full opportunity for growth, and the development of steady, strong, and permanent habits. We must distinguish between the instability of sincere growth and that of merely careless selfishness. The former is of small consequence when the foundations of the will are being deepened, even by sufferings or temptations which may shake it to its very depth.

The cause of the stability or instability

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

is what makes it really good or bad. The fluctuations that accompany the strain of temptation, and the growing pains which are inseparable from a fundamental change of affection and habit, although they may give the appearance of weakness to those who judge from effects alone, have nothing alarming about them when viewed in the light of permanent causes.

In learning to know ourselves more and more truly we need not be afraid of apparent and obvious instability. Provided that the dominant effort is sincere there is much to be learned from being willing to make mistakes, to try experiments, and even to flounder about in apparently unproductive experiences. If the effort running through all this confusion be sincere and single-minded, it

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

will ultimately lead to a stability all the more solid because of its actual contact with different phases of life. What is far more dangerous, and far weaker than external instability of will, is the rigidity and the lack of elasticity which come from the habit of self-righteousness or of merely traditional religion. In the instability of growth there is a state of comparative ventilation in which evil things come to the surface and are seen for what they are; but in the case of a rigid and inelastic will, which is always pre-occupied with external appearances and conceals its evil impulses even from itself, it is impossible that true self-knowledge should be gained. Our Lord consorted with publicans and sinners, and not with the scribes and Pharisees, because he felt the rigid self-righteous-

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

ness of the Pharisees as a barrier which he, even with all the resources at his command, could not hope to penetrate; this is the great danger of merely hereditary "goodness;" and, from a spiritual point of view, it results in the weakest kind of a will,—so weak that it is not susceptible of training until its self-complacency has been removed.

Until we have actually realized our selfish tendencies—not as a matter of emotion, or sentiment, or theological belief, but as a matter of fact which we fully accept and upon which we are willing logically to act—we cannot begin to train our wills or really to help one another in our internal growth. It is therefore very important that we should, without the least contempt or condescension, lead a sufferer to understand

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

his own weakness and to recognize its causes. It may be humiliating for him to do this, but the endurance of the humiliation, for the sake of the end in view, is in itself strengthening; and he can be led gradually to act against his own weakness and build up new habits of strength in his subconsciousness. In the case of a drunkard, for instance, it is the greedy appetite or selfishness in the mind that produces the craving in the body; and he can work from within outward, if he is led to recognize and repent of the selfishness as sin against his God. The outward and visible disease is in the nerves of the stomach, but behind this is inevitably a disease of the spirit. It does not matter whether it be an acquired evil or a hereditary taint, the trouble in the spirit is what causes the trouble in the body, and

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

the real evil cannot be thoroughly overcome unless the spirit is purged and cleansed. There are men who have merely checked the outward habit of drink and have directed their selfishness into some other and similar channel. They have become gluttons or have indulged in other sensual gratifications. The will is not truly cured or strengthened until the cause of the weakness in the spirit is discovered and removed.

The first part of the training of the will must be that of telling ourselves the truth from the point of view of motives and causes. This is the distinguishing characteristic of all spiritual life; it should always be a life in realities rather than appearances; and, even if our loyalty to the inner truth should lead us into conflict with the world, in the long

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

run our actions will prove to be wiser than those of the world, because based upon truth rather than expediency. However we may reason and act from apparent expediency in the outward affairs of life, when we come to the training of the will, we find that this is impossible. Here we must regard the truth itself and nothing else; and we must act from the love of right itself and nothing else. No religious sentiment, or custom, or conventionality, or worldly prudence is able to take the place of truth when we are required to see ourselves as we really are. And so, when a weak, selfish, and inefficient man says to himself without emotion, false shame, or excuse, but only with the single-minded desire to acknowledge the facts: "Yes, I am weak, selfish, and inefficient," or when a wilful, dis-

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

honest, and self-seeking man says to himself, in the same spirit: "Yes, I am wilful, dishonest, and self-seeking!" he has taken the first step in the training of his will. But he will have to go over the ground often before he can accept and digest the truth thus quietly, and without resistance from the natural man. Every time, however, that he makes his acknowledgment in his Father's sight, looking to him for all the new life and strength which is waiting for him, he is adding to the purity and force of his interior strength of will. After a while he begins to realize that the weak man in himself is not the only one, for there is another mind in himself which is looking down upon all this weakness.

Once the spiritual mind is opened by the willing acknowledgment of evil, the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

evils of the subconscious mind are permitted to come up into the consciousness to be shunned as sins. It is undoubtedly true that, when we have broken through the covering of our conceit sufficiently to begin to change our dominant affection, we recognize more and more evil in ourselves of which we were ignorant before.

But when our evils are recognized in the region of causes and motives, then it becomes necessary that the will should be aroused and developed in these same regions; that is to say, we must use a more interior will than we need to use in dealing with outward words or acts alone. As we grow in the practice and habit of recognizing our evil motives more nearly at their source and origin, the corresponding habit of using our wills in repentance by shunning our evils as sins must

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

be formed more interiorly also. Thus is formed the habit of active, positive, constant, interior prayer, and this is what we have called the second step in the training of the will; first, we must learn to know ourselves and to recognize the poison of evil as soon as it enters the mind; and, secondly, to apply the antidote of prayer and repentance in the region of motives and causes, wherever we may be, so that the use of our wills in this interior work may gradually become established in the subconsciousness.

A weak will is one which, while ignoring causes, attempts to work in effects alone. The ordinary drunkard, for instance, only thinks of whiskey when his temptation is upon him. If he can resist his temptation, all well and good; but if he cannot, then he must succumb.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

It is only after he has advanced somewhat in self-knowledge that he realizes the more general selfishness which lies behind his particular appetite. When he does this, and uses his will to overcome temptations to selfishness in other lines, the use of his will becomes more interior and strong, because he is learning to apply it in the more interior region of causes, and less in the merely external region of effects; thus, when it comes to refusing the whiskey, he finds he can more easily do it because of the strength that has grown from his refusing to yield to other and deeper selfish temptations.

One thing which is helpful in this kind of work is the perception of what we may call spiritual counterparts. We all know the old saying that a bully is a coward,

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

and the same principle underlying this familiar statement will be found to exist in all forms of evil. The bully has the appearance of courage; but, under a certain change of circumstances, this appearance of courage gives way to the appearance of fear. Thus we may notice also that if we are addicted to contempt or arrogance, there is lurking inside of us a tendency to mean servility. A change of circumstances will often reveal the fact that the underlying trait of character is the same, and that what manifests itself as arrogance in prosperity is apt to reveal itself as servility when prosperity has disappeared. Selfish exhilaration and despondency, lust and cruelty, are counterparts of this kind, and many others may be discovered in the course of growing self-knowl-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

edge. The realization of this principle is a great help in giving us an intelligent appreciation of our natural tendencies, and in showing us how we can work indirectly to overcome any evil affection, even when we are not conscious of direct temptation, by learning to control its counterpart. When, for instance, we control our impulse to be too friendly with those from whom we may expect worldly advantage, for the reason that our motive is selfish and sinful, we are at the same time working against the tendency which makes us contemptuous or condescending to the ordinary, familiar persons from whom we may feel that we have nothing to gain.

A persistent effort to use the will with an intelligent grasp of this principle is in itself strengthening, because it gives

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

us practice in working more in causes and less in effects. The process of freeing the will from the love of self is necessarily painful, because this love is the life of natural men, and we cannot have life taken from us, even partially, without suffering. Often the suffering of the dying selfish will lasts a long time before the joy of the new life from the unselfish will becomes apparent at all. Under these circumstances we often long for some excitement which may give us relief, but the temporary relief only results in a more painful reaction. The fact is that the pain and the relief both have their roots in self, and that the patient enduring of the pain strengthens the unselfish will and thus weakens the cause of the pain at its root. The turning toward relief, on the other hand, is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

a weakening of the unselfish will and so strengthens the real cause of the pain. The pain and the relief are counterparts, and spring from the same cause. By recognizing this fact we may save ourselves much useless effort in trying to escape from the inevitable, instead of quietly settling down to carrying the cross without which we cannot be born again as free children of our divine Father.

By our Lord's help, every will is adequate to bear its own cross, if only it be faced willingly. But we are confused by our lack of self-knowledge, which makes us attribute to other persons and to outside circumstances unfortunate conditions which are due to our own weakness. We cannot bear our burden with strong and loving wills so long as our endurance

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

is tainted with injustice to others, with prejudice, and a consequent lack of proportion in our judgments. All this disappears when we have really found ourselves out and admitted fully our own faults and evil tendencies. The problem then becomes comparatively simple; the will can focus upon its own burden of sin, and is relieved of all the confusion, weakness, and perplexity, which arises from a well-meaning but mistaken effort to conscientiously apportion blame where it may not belong, and to try to be just to others without being just to itself. By the honesty of true self-knowledge the problem of the will is simplified, and thus enabled to concentrate its power without waste. When we have found out our real burdens, we can let our imaginary burdens go; and most of the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

selfish misery and weakness in the world is due to the imaginary burdens which no honest will can carry for the very reason that they are false. So long as I am blaming other persons or my external circumstances for the consequences of my own inherent weakness of character, I cannot bring my will to bear honestly upon the actual situation, for I am deceiving myself with a fundamental falsehood; but, as soon as I have accepted the truth about myself, my will is released and set free for honest and concentrated effort; and, at the same time, my judgment becomes sound in estimating with charity the faults of others.

The third step in the training of the will is through our work in outward act. We are told that truth does not even be-

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

gin to exist, in a spiritual sense, until it has been carried out in act, and, according to this principle, none of the work which we do in causes, by recognizing our evil motives at their root and by the persistent practice of prayer and repentance, can possibly be effective or permanent until we apply it to our circumstances and human relations. The drunkard who wishes to overcome his habit cannot possibly help himself by indulging in kindly and ineffective wishes for the good of others; but, if he tries to find out the genuine needs of other people, and supplies them in practical ways by active service, he is undermining the foundation of his morbid appetite. It is impossible to say that work in effects is more important than work in causes, or that work in causes is more important

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

than work in effects; neither is sufficient without the other; but, when the will has been trained to work in causes in the light of real self-knowledge, work in effects becomes comparatively easy. To go back for a moment to the phraseology of the psychologist, *the new, good habit of the will cannot become established in the subconscious mind, excepting by repeated outward acts.*

When we realize that what makes the subconscious mind properly subordinate to the will, and thus renders the will strong and efficient in its supremacy over the whole man, is the constant carrying out of the good thoughts of the mind into external act, we are at once reminded of the closing passage of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (St. Luke vi., 47-49): —

THE TRAINING OF THE WILL

“Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my sayings and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like; he is like a man which built an house and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”

The house built upon the earth is the result of the weak will which, while listening to and talking about the truth, is not willing to carry it out; and which

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

often cannot even know the truth about itself, because the consciousness is so possessed by complacent self-righteousness. The house which cannot be shaken is the result of a will which has grown strong in the process of digging deep into the motives of the heart, until it has reached the bed-bottom rock of true self-knowledge. Upon this, as a foundation, are built up new habits of repentance and prayer which are worked into the very fiber of the soul by being carried out into the acts of daily life. We can do nothing strongly in effects until it has been done in causes, and nothing is complete in causes until it has been accomplished in effects. We must learn to dig deep, and then only will our foundation be secure and our house stable.

CHAPTER IV

Non-resistance

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil.”

IT is most interesting to note reverently how our Lord himself in his life on earth practised the principle of non-resistance which is so characteristic of his teaching, — the non-resistance which, with positive willingness, yields up everything that stands in the way of what is right and good.

There is nothing so demoralizing as a general habit of yielding weakly to every influence that comes along. To try to please everybody, to follow the line of

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

least resistance, is the one course which in the end does no one any good and leads steadily downward. In the spiritual life manliness and strength hold the same relative position that they do in the natural life; and no manliness or strength can possibly be acquired or retained excepting by the exercise of courage and the overcoming of obstacles. To get a true idea of spiritual non-resistance, therefore, we must begin by associating it with all the qualities that make for strength; and, as a matter of fact, it is that gentle yielding up of all the merely weak and selfish resistances of our minds and bodies, in order to make room for the inflow of new and unselfish life.

Power in action is gained by economy of force, or the concentration of all our

NON - RESISTANCE

strength upon the given work to be done at a given time. As spiritual beings, the whole of our duty can be summed up in being unselfishly loving, truthful without prejudice, and useful to our fellow-men. This is what we should learn to concentrate our strength upon, and therefore it follows that all the affections and desires that pull us away from unselfishness and truth should be yielded up and dropped entirely. If we wish to keep a true balance we should never practise non-resistance to evil without concentrating upon upholding what is good; neither should we try to uphold what is good without, at the same time, remembering never selfishly to resist the evil.

Before we can learn to live in satisfactory and unselfish relations to one an-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

other, we have, each one of us, to come into some sort of clear understanding with himself. And this two-fold principle of non-resistance and concentration must be practised in our individual relations to God, if we are to have the strength to practise it in our relations to each other. I do not mean that we must wait until we have mastered it in ourselves before we try to apply it in our social relations, I mean that we must practise it all through.

A great philosopher has summed up our duty as Christians in the precept, "Look to the Lord and shun evils as sins." Looking to the Lord is concentrating upon keeping His commandments; shunning evils as sins is dropping and yielding all the selfish resistances — all the resentments, envies, jealousies,

NON - RESISTANCE

and fears — which stand in the way of our obedience.

Supposing that we have suffered a great loss in business and are disappointed in hopes we have been cherishing for years, — how can we, in this state of shocked and pained disappointment, bring to bear upon our lives the helpful power of this principle? Our ambition has been disappointed, our love of possession has been wounded, and our vanity has been mortified; but all these things — ambition, love of possession, and vanity — are only different aspects of our lower nature, of the selfhood which we have been put here to overcome and outgrow, in order that we may develop into spiritual beings living from love of right and principle and not from self, from love to the neigh-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

bor and not from love of worldly reward. Clearly we must look up to the divine, over-ruling Spirit which has permitted this misfortune, we must concentrate upon the unselfish obedience that he requires of us, and we must be positively willing that our material ambition should be disappointed, that our love of possession should be wounded, and that our vanity should be mortified. In other words, we must concentrate upon obedience to what is better and wiser than ourselves, and yield up all resistance to suffering. When suffering is vigorously and willingly accepted without resistance, it opens the gates for truer life and power for use; and, after such a misfortune as the one we have been imagining, if it were received in this strong spirit of loving and gentle non-resistance,

NON - RESISTANCE

a man would go forward with a new and deeper strength, and so turn his temporary failure into lasting success.

It is not right or wise for us to impose our personal opinions upon each other; and, when we selfishly try to do this, it results in one of two things: either an altercation or argument which tends to breed excitement and increased antagonism; or else the weak submission of one party to the will of the other, not for the sake of love or truth but from a selfish desire for external peace and quiet. Nothing has been gained by such a submission. The freedom of one individual has been injured, and the personal pride of the other has been increased; and a very little thing may cause the discord to break out afresh under some other form.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

Now, if we call in the principle of non-resistance to help us in such a situation, we shall find in it the key to our freedom, to our dignity as spiritual beings, and to our lasting peace. Supposing that, at the beginning of what promises to be a bitter disagreement, one of the parties were to say firmly and quietly: "I am willing that you should think that I am wrong, *entirely* willing; I recognize your right to your own opinions; I care as much for your freedom as I do for my own; only I must be true to the same principle with regard to myself. I have an equal right to my convictions, and it is as much my duty to preserve my own freedom as it is to respect yours." The most arrogant bully is usually at a loss when he is confronted with this attitude of combined kindness and firmness in obedience to a

NON - RESISTANCE

universal principle. Lift the discussion up out of the region of personal opinions to the plane of respect for human freedom, and it must either collapse altogether or gain vastly in dignity and usefulness. It is a very simple matter: "I am willing to be thought wrong; I give up all desire for personal sympathy, in so far as this desire is selfish; I do not resist the pain of criticism, but am willing to accept it entirely; thus all my strength is set free to concentrate upon a tolerant respect for the right of private judgment, and my own judgment is greatly clarified."

Now if we imagine a family or small community of people agreeing together in the love of this principle, we find that it would lead to an uncommon degree of openness and frankness. All would feel that there was no fear of being bullied,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

no fear of the tyranny by which the opinion of one person is imposed upon another; consequently all would feel free to express their opinions. At the same time all would unite in a common concentration upon loving obedience to principle, and all the opinions expressed would be considered in the light of this fundamental law. As a result, the trivial, prejudiced, and selfish opinions expressed would very soon be found out and voluntarily abandoned, not in obedience to the will of the majority but from the perception of truth which comes from the light of sympathetic criticism all around. Such a community would be a truly spiritual society, a type of the kingdom of heaven; for the strength of all the individuals would be combined in maintaining the individual freedom

NON - RESISTANCE

of all, in upholding the principle of obedience to law and in giving up all merely personal or selfish resistance to the means of purification — however painful — which the divine providence would permit.

It is not only, however, in our relations with persons that this divine teaching calls upon us not to resist evil. What we call our circumstances — circumstances that appear to be limiting, oppressive, and unnecessary — frequently call upon us for all the strength and patience which wise non-resistance affords. We may have, for example, a physical infirmity, which carries with it a constant sense of fatigue, and thus appears to bar us out from the accomplishment of the particular work we have at heart. This infirmity in itself

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

is an evil, for it is a departure from the perfect order in which our Father intends his children to live; and this evil we must not resist. If we do resist it, the infirmity ceases to be only one of the body, but spreads, through our resistance, to the soul. We are at present living in a mixed world in which we have blessed opportunities for learning the truth and following the right, but in which, also, on account of the perversity of human nature — on account of the presence of self-love and worldliness — much evil exists, and, for the sake of the freedom of the human will, must be permitted. We have evil in ourselves for which we are directly responsible, and this we must continually shun, looking to our Father for the opposite good; but there is also evil — sometimes

NON - RESISTANCE

in ourselves and sometimes in others — for which we are not responsible. This inevitable evil, whether it take the form of physical ill, of cramping circumstances, or of unfriendliness from others, must never be resisted; for, by resistance, the evil grows and spreads. When we pray, “Thy will be done,” we are asking for a cheerful, wholesome willingness to accept the inevitable conditions and circumstances of our lives. Without this willingness, we become the slaves of those things which should properly be our servants. With this willingness we find our freedom as loving and obedient children of the Father. As we learn to accept in a generous spirit all the things which we would gladly have otherwise, if it were possible; we gain, by that very submission, a great power to overcome

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

all the evils for which we are properly responsible, and also to receive in large measure the vitality and virility which always come to those who conquer themselves from obedience to God.

We are taught that the stream of the Father's over-ruling love is continually working to protect his children. But, in order to receive the full benefit of that protection our own free wills must be working in accord with his will, must be coöperating with the Spirit itself. Thus it comes about that, if my brother attacks me with contempt or ill-will, and I am irritated into answering him with the same feeling, I lose the full protection of the Father's vital love, because the Spirit cannot mix with evil. If, on the other hand, I am not resentful because he is angry or con-

NON - RESISTANCE

temptuous, but meet him with patient helpfulness, I am thereby keeping myself within the stream of the divine loving-kindness, and thus come within the sphere of its full protection; I also retain the power of helping my brother as soon as he becomes willing to receive my help.

It has been said: "Internal men, as are the angels of heaven, do not will the recompense of evil for evil, but from heavenly charity forgive, for they know that the Lord protects all who are in good against the evil, and that He protects according to the good appertaining to them, and that He would not protect, if, by reason of the evil done to themselves, they should be inflamed with enmity, hatred, and revenge, for those evils avert protection."

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

The principle of non-resistance has been misinterpreted by the world so as to appear to mean a cowardly acceptance of evil in others which would make us the servants of evil instead of the free children of God. It is necessary to distinguish between the non-resistance which is good and requires all the courage and manhood of which we are capable, and the non-resistance which is merely a weak submission to our own cowardice and to the wickedness of others. True and good non-resistance can only be acquired by the conquest of our own evil passions; and, whenever we have once overcome these in ourselves, we are not likely to be afraid of the same evil passions in others. False and evil non-resistance implies first a subjection to our own evil passions, and

NON - RESISTANCE

then a servile submission to the same evil things in others. It is, of course, only the good non-resistance that is spoken of in this passage; the non-resistance which steadfastly upholds the truth and never compromises with falsehood, which upholds the truth without harshness and only in a helpful spirit; the non-resistance which gives up all things that are only personally, or selfishly pleasant or advantageous, for the sake of those things which are universally valuable.

Without a strong concentration upon the truth of principles, non-resistance would be merely flabby and selfish weakness; and, if we did not yield up our merely personal and selfish affections and desires, our upholding of principle would be harsh and destructive. We

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

must never yield for the sake of self, but always yield up what is wrong for the sake of lovingly and patiently upholding and doing what is right.

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

When our Lord made this prayer, in his agony, he was not yet glorified. The

NON - RESISTANCE

natural in him was suffering intensely from apprehension of the terrible crisis he was about to go through. The indignities, hardships, and physical exhaustion and torture to which he was about to submit were only outward and visible correspondences of far keener suffering resulting from the attacks of the combined forces of hell upon the inmost affections of his soul. Our imaginations cannot follow the course of these inward sufferings, for no experiences of our own could give an adequate idea of the intense torment he underwent, for the very reason that within his mortal frame the spirit of absolute holiness was present. The rage of hell, with all the cruel hatred for the good, which is characteristic of evil, was concentrated upon the divine unselfish love that was the heart

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and spirit of this Man. But, if we consider only the external events that took place between the time of this prayer in the garden and the time when his mortal body was found to be dead upon the cross, we can easily see that unless our Lord had been willing to take the cup, he could not possibly have maintained the power and freedom of his soul throughout the course of the indignities and brutalities to which he was subjected. If he had yielded to the fear and resistance in his natural man, he could not have met the company of armed men Judas was leading, with the divinely quiet words:

“Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.” Words which he spoke with so much dignity and freedom

NON - RESISTANCE

and power, that, "as soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell on the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said,

"I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

And when Peter had cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"

If he had refused to drink the cup, if he had pitied himself, if he had not wholly given up his natural man in obedience to the Father's will, if he had resisted the evil which was threatening to overwhelm him, he could not have answered the high priest with noble independence, as he said,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

“ I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I have said.”

And then, when he had been struck by one of the officers, incensed by his freedom from all servile fear, Jesus again said, “ If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? ”

His mind was open to conviction. He would have been willing to acknowledge a mistake if he had made one, and all his faculties were alert through the power of the great love which was within his heart.

And then, when the high priest had

NON - RESISTANCE

had enough of him, and he came before Pilate, Pilate asked him,

“Art thou the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered him, “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?” Pilate answered him, “Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priest have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?”

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

Here is the greatest and most noble example of non-resistance in the history of man. Here was absolute concentration upon upholding the truth of his divine kingship, in the face of a murderous rabble on the one hand, and of the cold and worldly indifference of Pilate on the other. There is not a trace of resentment or antagonism to the indignities and cruelties to which he was subjected: there is not a suspicion of resistance to evil. He was willing that they should smite him, spit upon him, pervert his message of truth, and torture his body with a cruel death; and, because of this entire willingness to suffer what could only affect his human self-hood, he was able to concentrate all the divine power of his soul on

NON - RESISTANCE

upholding the heavenly truth which is the salvation of the whole human race.

This is how our Lord practised non-resistance in the supreme moments of his life on earth, and thus established his spiritual kingdom for us to live in. He had preached the principle in the Sermon on the Mount, and here, when put to the most difficult test, he was true to his own word.

Would that we might follow in his footsteps, meeting the unfriendliness and hatred of enemies by shunning all unfriendliness or hatred in ourselves; meeting the hardness of our circumstances with loving and patient willingness; always remembering to stand by the truth at all costs, and never compromising with falsehood for the sake of a quiet life.

CHAPTER V

Balance

MANLINESS must ultimately depend upon passion, — that is, the will to put through whatever is to be done at whatever expense of suffering.

But in states of purification, for which nervous suffering offers so clear an opportunity, it is frequently the case that there are apparently different and even opposing wills at work in the same person at the same time. This, of course, gives the outward effect of absence of will, for the balance of consciousness is tempora-

BALANCE

rily upset. Hence the vacillations of judgment and indecision caused in nervous states. The presence of a true and understanding friend is invaluable in such conditions; for, with a little intelligent sympathy and firmness, the mind can be led to concentrate upon a sensible course of action which fortifies the stronger and sounder elements of the will. In every case this course will be the most quiet and the most unselfish of the various lines of action or inaction to which the vacillating mind is prompted.

Gradually, by repeated efforts along the line of clear, unselfish principle, the will may become strengthened, much as a muscle may be strengthened by repeated exercise; and ultimately it learns to prefer the wise, though disagreeable

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

or painful, course to the weak and easy one.

In one of his sermons, Phillips Brooks once said: "Let everything that is in your mind come out, and then you can choose what is good and throw away what is bad." The worst possible course is to cover up, for this prevents the possibility of self-knowledge and of a genuine choice.

This unstable or fluid state of the will, therefore, has its great uses in the purification of the heart and the formation of character; but the danger is that it may disappear and that a superficial concentration and stability may be restored before the will has become purified and found out what it really loves best, as distinguished from the temporary distractions and aberrations of self-love.

BALANCE

When nerves have recovered to a certain extent, there are apt to come times of elation, in which old habits of selfishness reassert themselves. But these contain within themselves the seed of their own destruction, and the pendulum usually swings back in time to the former states of weakness and vacillation, when the practice of sober judgment along the line of unselfish effort must be begun again.

We can imagine, for instance, a person breaking down as a result of the strain caused by various unfortunate or humiliating circumstances. A business man who is making a good income commits several errors of judgment which lead to a serious loss of property; and, at the same time, discovers that he was deliberately led on by other persons, through

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

appeals to his vanity, and that these other persons ultimately benefited by the loss. The realization that he had been merely used as an instrument in the hands of other people, and that through his own weakness he had proved himself inefficient and unreliable, brings about a state of suffering which causes sleeplessness and ultimately collapse.

Now imagine that, during the course of his illness and retirement, it turns out that some of the investments he had considered worthless began unexpectedly to acquire considerable value. This fact would have the tendency to modify his suffering in so far as it was the result of financial loss, and he might easily persuade himself — especially under the influence of good-natured and injudicious friends — that after all, he had not shown

BALANCE

such poor judgment as had been at first supposed.

This second consideration then alleviates the pain of mortified vanity, and our friend gradually regains his spirits, begins to sleep better, takes exercise, and finds his appetite restored.

In this case, while it is probable that the patient's *original* stock of pride and self-reliance was considerably shaken by his illness and its causes, the good forces which were at work to disintegrate the evil in him did not get far enough to put him consciously on the right track.

His recovery was not due to the fact that he had faced the true facts of his experience as a wiser man, having borne the entire amount of suffering required without any spurious relief, but because

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

he had dodged the full significance of the facts and allowed himself the consolation of mere self-deception.

As such a recovery would not be firmly founded upon corresponding growth of character, so it would not be likely to be permanent, — unless the dodging and self-deceiving process were successfully carried on indefinitely.

Supposing, however, such a person to be sincere and truth-loving at bottom; and supposing him to break down again after a moderate interval of time, the fact of his failure — after the previous illness — to make use of his experience in the best way would tend to light up his consciousness more thoroughly as to his own character.

It would be rather a trying thing to contemplate the growth of a human

BALANCE

soul through a long series of such trials, and it is impossible for any one to know surely of another how deep the foundations of his character were intended to be laid; but we know that in proportion to the depth of self-knowledge acquired through suffering will be the ultimate stability of the cure.

In the fluid state of the will which has been briefly described, there is a kind of limpness which gives the effect of inefficiency and weakness; but, if this condition is taken advantage of to unravel the true from the false in our own lives, the time will come when the right course seems to open up before us without insuperable obstacles. We then find that we can act from principle without the paralyzing doubts which have their origin in some form of self-love, and our

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

very love for what is good and opposed to the weaknesses we have cast off will make us assert the truth by our actions with firmness and decision. From having seemed the mere victims of suffering in the past we shall have learned to understand its value with intelligent gratitude, and be prepared to suffer still more, if necessary, for the sake of the truth which shall have become our enduring possession.

If it had not been for the softening and temporary weakening of the will, our hearts could not have been cleansed; and, if it were not for the new love and energy which such cleansing brings in its train, we could not carry into effect the lessons we have been privileged to learn. For, when the will has acquired a long habit of selfish activity, it needs

BALANCE

the melting effect of the refiner's fire before it can adapt itself to purer and more delicate activity.

It is always harder to do what is disagreeable than what is pleasant, — to accomplish something which causes pain to one's self than something which is an immediate cause of comfort or happiness; and the fact must be faced, in states of purification, that for a long time the work to be done must be unpleasant and often painful.

Pleasure and pain are the result of the satisfaction or disappointment of our desires — be they physical or moral — and, until our desires, ambitions, and affections have been purified of self-love, the satisfaction of unselfishness will seem tame and inadequate, while the absence of selfish gratification, the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

absence of sympathy in moral weakness, and the absence of all encouragement of pride must often have the effect of acute depression and humiliation.

Even after the choice of an unselfish life has been seriously and earnestly made, as alone capable of satisfying our deepest aspirations, rebellious impulses and habits will continually assert themselves to inflict pain and discouragement, and the higher and truer aspirations will sometimes disappear from the consciousness for a time, forgotten under the pressure of discouragement.

These processes are necessarily painful, but the strength to pick one's self up quickly after a fall, to maintain a humble and alert lookout in states of comparative ease, and the practice of

BALANCE

detailed self-denial, gradually lead to an entirely new kind of satisfaction which only experience itself can teach.

“Then shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me, and I will offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.”

When this new satisfaction has been once felt, and carefully separated from any possible gratification of moral conceit or complacency, the burden of the journey is immensely lightened. But of course there is no fixed turning-point or definite mark beyond which none of the temptations to weakness will never assert themselves. The path of progress — when it is genuine — is too winding and difficult for that, and the gain is more from the fact that the strength to overcome obstacles grows alive and

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

confident than that the obstacles themselves disappear.

If we could imagine the possibility of a perfectly good man, it is inconceivable that he should have nervous illness without an organic cause; and if, in the same way, we could imagine a consistently evil person without a redeeming trait, it would be just as impossible for him to suffer in this way. What seem to be the causes of this disease are worries and anxieties which arouse in the consciousness the clashing of inconsistent elements of heart and mind. When this contest has once begun, it will, in most cases, have to go on until the great question is settled, — whether or not we are willing to give up everything else for that one thing which is called by so many different names, such as “the

BALANCE

grain of mustard seed ” or “ the pearl of great price.”

Of course the common impression among nervous sufferers is that they are the victims of great misfortune; but in many cases it would seem to depend entirely upon them to turn these conditions into valuable discipline. It surely does not take very deep insight to realize that mere worldly and physical enjoyments must soon come to an end, and that the only permanent and lasting satisfactions rest upon the growth of something within ourselves which is such that it can expand and develop, through ever-increasing sympathy and appreciation, with that which is outside and beyond ourselves. The only lasting growth is in accordance with spiritual law, and the experience of many persons in such

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

conditions as these strikingly confirms the truth of the teaching of the gospel. It also reveals with vivid clearness the fact so long forgotten by conventional Christians that there is no compromise possible between "the world" and the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER VI

The Power of Habit

ALL yielding to temptation is resistance to the will of God, — things which he wishes us to do that we do not wish to do, and duties which we do not like and therefore neglect. These things we make our “adversaries” because we place ourselves in a position of resistance to them. Whenever we act from thoughtless self-love or worldliness we are making God, himself, our adversary, because, although he is constantly trying to draw us nearer to himself, — we are all the time using our own wills in opposition to him.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

He is not really an adversary but our nearest and dearest friend, but the self in us does not love him or like his ways; and, so long as we are living from the love of self, we are continually resisting him and so making him our "adversary."

Of course we are for the most part not conscious of such habitual resistance to God's will, for we are not especially interested in finding out what his will really is, and we cannot truly appreciate or understand anything in this world unless we are interested enough to take pains to learn about it. We inherit naturally an interest in outside things which appeal to our senses and contribute to our personal enjoyment or discomfort; but our interest in interior, spiritual things, among which of course

THE POWER OF HABIT

the will of the Father is the most important, only comes to us through individual experience and development from the discipline of life.

We call these two states the "natural" and the "spiritual" man, and we know that they are continually warring upon one another; but, according to the true order of normal human development, the natural state gradually gives way as the spiritual state grows in strength by overcoming temptation. The natural state has the power of a long inheritance behind it which is handed down in the flesh and blood and natural characteristics of different families and nationalities. These inheritances include mental and moral characteristics which are closely allied to the purely physical nature. It is a very important

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and interesting fact for us to understand and realize, no matter how moral and respectable our inherited tendencies and habits may be, that these have nothing whatever to do with our spiritual nature excepting in so far as that they may or may not provide obstacles for our spiritual nature to overcome. We may say both of good and evil, moral and vicious, intelligent and stupid, coarse and delicate, weak and strong natural tendencies that, in themselves, they have nothing to do with the life of the spirit and with the spiritual responsibilities which contribute to our interior characters and our eternal life. For, no matter how good and respectable hereditary character and capacity appear to be, they are derived from the principle of self-love and self-assertion which is at the root of all evil

THE POWER OF HABIT

as well as of all natural character. If I am honest because it is easier for me to be honest than otherwise, and because my father and my grandfather were honorable men and I am proud of their character, my honesty, of course, has nothing to do with my conscious obedience to God any more than my dishonesty would have to do with conscious disobedience to him, if I were born with a love of stealing, and my father and grandfather had been thieves, and I had no means of finding God. Our spiritual nature only begins to wake up into life when we realize our personal relation and responsibility to our divine Father, and, as the consciousness of this personal relation develops, through our faithfulness to it, it opens up to us a new life with new and living responsibilities, trials,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and joys, belonging to a state which shall last forever.

“ Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

By “ agree with thine adversary quickly ” is meant the giving up and dropping resistance to our Father’s will while the resistance is still young and has not yet had time to fasten itself upon us in the form of a habit; for we cannot possibly remain voluntarily in a state of resistance and disobedience to his will without its growing upon us so that it becomes more and more difficult to

THE POWER OF HABIT

drop it. Habits of self-will become very firmly imbedded, not only in our minds but also in our nerves; so that, when finally we desire to be free from them, we often find ourselves enclosed between prison walls. We know that a great part of our minds lies beneath the surface of our present consciousness, just as the surface of the sea that we watch glittering in the sunlight is only a very small part of the whole mass of water that forms the ocean with its unsounded depths; we also know that the character or quality of this unconscious mind is the result of the consciousness of the past, — and not only of our own past but of our ancestors before us. We are what our yesterdays have made us, and not only our own yesterdays but also those of our fathers and forebears. We find ourselves

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

in youth with a strong tendency established by our inheritance in the subconscious mind, and every conscious act of our lives in the line of this same subconscious tendency tends to increase and strengthen it. If the tendency be good, it becomes more fixedly good as time goes on, but if the tendency be evil, every evil act of ours adds to the weight of the chains that are keeping us in bondage; and the only way in which we can make our way out is by deliberately choosing to take God's way instead of our own, or, in other words, by practising the principles of the spiritual life. By turning to God with a sense of our dependence upon him, and by praying to be shown our faults as they are in his sight, in order that we may learn to put them away in obedience to his will, we

THE POWER OF HABIT

draw near to the infinite power that can overcome the most stubborn and tyrannical evil in existence. It was the young shepherd lad who slew the overbearing and arrogant Goliath, — not by the help of sword and spear but by the power of the living God; and it is wonderful to see the false strength of evil habits disappearing before the warm glow of his saving spirit.

But, when our inheritance or the course of our past lives has been such as to shut us up within the prison walls of habit, it is also necessary for us to pay the uttermost farthing before we can take advantage of our Father's love and step out into the freedom and sunshine of his presence. It is not that he exacts from us the payment of a debt in labor or suffering, but that we keep ourselves

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

in prison by our own wills; and that, having weakened them by resistance in the past, we cannot strengthen them by merely wishing to be good but only by learning to yield where we have resisted before and to obey where we have rebelled before. This is the payment of the uttermost farthing, — that every weakness must be turned into strength and every self-centered habit of mind turned into the opposite habit of generous helpfulness. Of course it is impossible that the workings of the spirit within us, when it is drawing us toward freedom, should not occasion suffering. We must suffer for everything that is selfish in us before it can be taken away, and it is the willing acceptance of this suffering that purifies us and is part of the payment of our debt.

THE POWER OF HABIT

The willing endurance of pain is the test of unselfish love, and there is nothing that cleanses the heart and mind so thoroughly as the full and generous acceptance, in patience and humility and cheerfulness, of whatever suffering the Father sees fit to permit us to go through. In times of ease we are apt to be self-satisfied and not to realize our selfishness and weakness, so long as we can cover it up and it does not attract the attention of other people, but the blessing of suffering is that it forces our evils to the front and reveals to ourselves our impatience, rebellion, irritability, and self-pity. Thus we are enabled to see ourselves as we are in the light of truth and can turn to God for help with a new appreciation of our own need and of his great love.

CHAPTER VII

Appearances and Reality

IT is a fact of human nature which we do not sufficiently remember that we have both an “inside” and an “outside” to our minds. The inside has its own life which is not necessarily the same as the outside; and the outside of our minds — that which we show to the world in our ordinary speech and actions — is not necessarily the same as the inside. The principal difference between them that first attracts our attention is that our inside thoughts are, for the most part, private

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

thoughts and are free from the restraints which are imposed upon us by our caring what other people think. So long as other people do not know what we think, we are, of course, relieved from all anxiety or care for their good opinion, and our thoughts, as far as people are concerned, are free as air. In the outside of our minds, however, just the opposite condition exists. We are liable to be criticized, liked or disliked, respected or looked down upon, by our associates and friends according to the impression that we make upon them; and, as it is a universal, natural desire to be liked and respected, our natural tendency is to say and do such things as will make a good impression. This desire for winning approval for its own sake is to be expected and is almost universal at some

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

time of life, and in early childhood it is not only common but normal. Little children need to feel the encouragement of praise and the incentives of reward, for they have not as yet either the understanding or the will to respond to an appeal to principle or law without the warming and cherishing effect of natural, personal affection; but a young person grows strong in character in proportion as he learns not to rely upon praise or reward as a motive for action, and gradually to live from obedience to principle without undue regard to what anybody thinks.

When the deeper and stronger motives of life have thus taken root, when we have come to the knowledge of what it means to do right for right's sake, these deeper motives become part of our in-

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

side mind, for we are not waiting to see what impression we are going to make before we form our judgment as to what we shall or shall not do; but in the privacy of our own thoughts we decide upon the course which seems to us best because it is in harmony with true principle, and the outside of our mind — our speech, our manner, and our actions, — will be the direct and true result of our inner thought. In this case the outside and the inside of the mind are to all intents and purposes one mind, because they are to each other in the relation of cause and effect; for what the inner mind thinks and wills the outer mind speaks and does.

But the development of the will which results in a life of obedience to principle is frequently a very slow development,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and for many years we may live along — for the most part without knowing it — without any real conviction of principle, without any real love of good for its own sake, without any real passion for truth, — only following the lines of direction laid out for us by custom, heredity, or the desire to accomplish something which will bring us either profit, distinction, or as little trouble as possible.

In proportion as this is the case, the difference between the life of our outside minds and of our inside minds will be greater, for the reason that our motives of life will be comparatively shallow and will leave the whole region of our deeper and more private thoughts disconnected from the outward habits of our speech and action. Hence in this state the human house is really divided against itself, for

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

what a man thinks in his inmost heart may be just the opposite of what he speaks in his outer life, and the acts that he carries out in his outer life may be without the support of his inner conviction.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the many people in the world who, unfortunately, are living shallow and insincere lives are therefore conscious of the fact. We are so constituted that it is only the light which we derive from actively obeying true principles which can reveal to us our true inward condition. We have to have a true standard before we can make an intelligent comparison or form a true judgment; and, when we have no true standard, our unconscious conceit or self-complacency falsifies our vision so that we practically

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

do not see anything within ourselves as it really is. Moreover, if we find ourselves doing wrong in outward act and coming into conflict with some obvious external code of conduct, the same self-love or complacency is very quick to find excuses or palliations to cover up the real reason of our mistake. Hence it comes about that, as the years roll on, our house becomes more and more divided against itself; for the inner region of our minds absorbs unconsciously the evil fruits of our self-love while remaining in darkness, and the outward habits of life become more and more insincere and artificial because they are cut off from the inner source of their true vitality and power.

It was this state of proud and wilful self-ignorance which our Lord was con-

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

fronted with in the Pharisees of his day, but it is necessary for us to recognize the same condition as a very common one at all times and among all kinds of people in various degrees. It is not only the typical Pharisees of our day — the proud, learned, and self-righteous leaders of public opinion — but a host of others, not so conspicuous or prominent, who are suffering from the darkness of self-ignorance. But no life has probably ever been lived without its share of sorrow; and it is mainly through the hard experiences and painful crises of life that the rays of light are permitted to penetrate into this thick darkness. In the presence of disaster people are more likely to ask themselves strict and searching questions to account for mistakes or unfortunate happenings

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

which cannot be accounted for in the usual superficial ways; and the sense of weakness that comes from discovering the unreliability of our own personal powers often draws out from the depths of the inner consciousness a sincere cry for help which is really that of a child of God. When this happens it means the beginning of a new and deeper life which will welcome the light of truth more and more as it reveals all follies and weaknesses that have hitherto kept the soul in bondage.

It is no mere theory or fanciful figure of speech which our Lord Jesus Christ used when he said that we must be born again. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." It is a sober, practical fact that, if we are to develop in character, and usefulness, and

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

the capacity for lasting joy, it is absolutely necessary for us to pass through the trial of learning to know ourselves. In his own way and in his own good time the Lord will open up our spirits so that we shall be willing to admit the light of his truth and learn to see ourselves plainly as we are in his sight. This trial will be the test of our own truth; for it will prove whether we love his truth enough to sacrifice all the personal vanities and flattering prejudices which stand in the way of our being true men and women according to God's standard of truth. This trial will also test the strength of our love so that we shall discover whether we love God and our fellow-men enough to give up the love of self and of the world.

The passing from complacent self-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

ignorance, which is the state in which we grow up from early youth up to the time of our spiritual awakening, to the state of intelligent and honest self-knowledge, according to the truth as it is in God's sight and the standard given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, is the most valuable experience which it is possible for a soul to undergo.

It must be that many souls do not have this experience in the present life, but have to wait until after the death of the body before they can clearly see what they really are; but, after all, it depends upon our own earnestness, and sincerity, and courage, whether we shall begin to open up in the region of our inner minds even now in our earthly life; and so, by knowing and accepting the truth, begin consciously to travel nearer to the heav-

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

only states of unselfish love, unprejudiced truth, and perfect freedom from self. There is no possible joy which can compare with this state of conscious freedom and union with God; and it necessarily implies a bond of inner friendship with every other soul who is ready to receive it. But, if we turn to the conditions in which we now are, and ask ourselves what it is that keeps us from the light of self-knowledge more than anything else, we shall find that it is a certain sensitive shrinking from the very truth which would bring us light and life. Let us look into our own hearts and see all the excuses that we make, all the arguments that we put forth, all the falsely righteous indignation that we pump up, to throw down any line of thought or any point of view which will hurt the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tender spot of our self-love and make us feel that we are inferior, cheaper, less honorable, or less attractive than we have always supposed. We will scratch, bite, and sting from the resentment aroused in the hornet's nest of selfish desires and thoughts by a ray of sunlight shining down from God's blue sky. Falsehood is always shrinking and hiding away from truth; and, until we know our own falsehood sufficiently to separate ourselves from it, and to claim our heritage of light as the free children of our Father, we can not enter into his kingdom or understand the strength, delicacy and happiness, of trying to live from his spirit. It is not necessary that we should succeed all at once, for our Father is as reasonable as he is loving and just, but it is necessary that we

APPEARANCES AND REALITY

should gird up our loins and start with real determination and persistency upon the journey, — the journey of the real, and eternal life.

CHAPTER VIII

Stagnation and Life

INDIFFERENCE, or being neither cold nor hot, is the result of lack of passion; and by passion we mean a driving force so strong that it is willing to suffer in order to gain its end. The word passion is used in different senses, and it is often associated only with evil; but this is not really the truest use of the word, for its essential meaning is derived from a word that means simply to suffer. In this sense it is used in the expression, "our Lord's passion upon the cross" which means that his love for men was so great that no suffer-

STAGNATION AND LIFE

ing on earth could prevent his devoting his life to their cause. All forms of heroism imply the existence of passion, — imply the existence of a driving energy or love for some aim or object outside of self which is so strong that it cannot possibly be stopped by any personal suffering, loss, or fear of suffering or loss. Of course the nobility of the passion depends on the purity of the motive which actuates it; and heroic deeds performed from thirst for fame or distinction cannot, of course, be compared in beauty or ultimate usefulness with other heroic deeds which are done only for the sake of duty and which often are entirely unknown and never meet with any reward or recognition from men. But, nevertheless, it is far better to have a passion of an inferior kind than to have

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

no passion at all; and it is also true that, as between evils of different kinds, the passionate evils that break out with tumult and commotion in acts of sin and folly are less dangerous and degrading than the still, quiescent evils which result in death-like, stagnant states of self-centeredness. This fact may be verified by observation among people whose states are sufficiently extreme to make their quality easily recognized. At the George Jr., Republic, for instance, where wayward boys and girls are gathered in from the less favored population of our large cities, it is not the boys who have been arrested for breaking in and burglary, or for other active crimes and misdemeanors, that are the hardest to deal with,—for, in these boys there is a spirit of enterprise or adventure which has in

STAGNATION AND LIFE

it the germs of life, and which can be turned into good and useful channels as the darkness of their moral ignorance is cleared away; but the worst and hardest cases are those who show no great active energy for evil on the outside, but who sit and lean back lazily and heavily in states of self-indulgence. When the self takes the form of some subtle inner selfishness, it is like a worm or vampire sucking the life out of the spirit of a man, and the result upon his apparent character is a listless and lazy indifference which is neither hot nor cold, for, he has not energy enough left either to do any strong good action nor to commit any sin which requires the expenditure of force. These are those of whom it was written, "Would that you were either cold or hot! But now, be-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

cause you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

The self-centered habit of mind, even when it is not associated with any visible or tangible self-indulgence, is what chiefly stands in the way of unselfish passion; and, of course, it is possible to lead lives which are outwardly good and respectable, to follow occupations which are useful and benevolent, and even to be habitually amiable in our relations to other people, and, at the same time, to do all this with an eye to the praise, appreciation, popularity, or other rewards which we crave for ourselves as our chief source of happiness. There is an abundance of so-called good work carried on in the world, — work which is really useful and valuable to other people —

STAGNATION AND LIFE

which proceeds from a desire on the part of the worker to benefit himself only, by means of doing good to others. This thread of self-centered habit runs through all the occupations of life, as well as being characteristic of people whose only avowed object is their own pleasure; and it often results in the work being done with efficiency, — depending upon the talents of the worker, — sometimes with quite brilliant success, but never with true passion and the living spirit that comes through the working of an unselfish motive. We may feed the stomachs of the hungry, put clothes upon the backs of the naked, visit the prisoners in their affliction, and give our bodies to be burned, without conveying the least particle of spiritual nourishment to the life of a fellow-soul; and, although

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

the food, and clothes, and recreation we provide for needy persons may be extremely useful when combined with some spark of living character in their own hearts, — some spark of love or gratitude in them, — as far as we are concerned all such self-centered service belongs to the category of death and has no life in it, for it has nothing which connects us with the spirit of our Lord, — nothing of the divine passion which loves to have the self denied and disappointed for the sake of what is beyond any valuation or any price.

It is one of the disadvantages of youth that it is apt to have impulses of heroism without clear discrimination between the essence and appearance of heroic acts. In youth we are apt to respond promptly to striking examples of obvious heroism

STAGNATION AND LIFE

without stopping to consider the motives and causes which lead to these brilliant achievements; and, at the same time, we are apt to pass unnoticed on our daily walks through life many humble and inconspicuous persons whose spirit partakes of the genuine heroism of unselfish passion. If we are sincere in practising the regular requirements of spiritual growth, — if we are as much in earnest as we know how to be in truly acknowledging our faults and in gradually improving our habits, our outlook upon life will gradually change also, and we shall be less easily captivated by sensational and dramatic examples of virtue, while our appreciation for steady, self-denying, and persistent obedience will grow more and more profound.

But what are we to do if we are in

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

bondage — through heredity or long habit, — to one or many forms of self-centered craving? What are we to do if we find, no matter how strongly we try to turn away from self in some useful work, the self claiming us at once as soon as that particular work is done? What are we to do if *we cannot see* the lowly and to us uninteresting persons who really need our sympathy and love? How can our vision become clear while we can only see men as trees walking, or how can we pierce the deadly covering of dullness and lack of interest which confronts us while our master is calling upon us for loving, joyful and spontaneous service? We must realize that this hard shell of selfishness is our natural inheritance and that it provides an obstacle for the spirit within us to overcome.

STAGNATION AND LIFE

While we are all born with some form or phase of habitual self-love or worldliness, we also have, each one of us, a little well-spring of life way down in the depths of our souls. These two forces are eternally opposed to each other, and it is the object of our labor and pilgrimage in this world to learn to separate ourselves sufficiently from the temptations of self to become aware, as a living reality, of this well-spring from on high which is ready to pour in life wherever we open for it the slightest channel, by removing the habits, and thoughts, and desires, that belong to death. We must realize that our life is a process of growth and change, we must not expect to reach perfection to-day or to-morrow, but we must learn to distinguish more clearly and more honestly between what is good and bad

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

in our own hearts. At first the putting away of selfish habits may seem like the loss of life, but that is only because our standard of life is more or less identified with selfish enjoyment. If we persist faithfully we shall find a new joy in denying ourselves for the sake of the new life which, when we have become accustomed to its workings, becomes joy itself.

Unselfish passion comes into existence when the truth is perceived that no selfish or personal joy or suffering can be weighed in the same scale or compared by the same measure as the satisfactions which come simply to the children of God through direct obedience to his will. Heroism ceases to be heroism in the natural sense when we realize that it is only part of the every-day obedience of a child of God who sees things and their

STAGNATION AND LIFE

values simply as they are in the light of truth. “What can a man gain if he lose his own soul, or what can a man receive in exchange for his soul?” To him who asks this question in the simple sincerity of conviction, what is there in any way remarkable in his preferring to die at his post rather than betray a trust, — what is there remarkable in his willingness to risk his own life when duty requires of him to stand by his brother in peril? The fact is that what the world calls heroism is the every-day commonplace of the Kingdom of Heaven; it is the natural result of unselfish passion which, as we have said, is a driving force which is so strong that no personal considerations of pleasure or pain can possibly impede or obstruct it. It is like the still waters that run so deep that

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

they do not attract us with the charm of dancing waves or swirling currents, — it is the vehicle by which we receive the stream of the spirit into the depths of our being in order to pour it out, in obedience to our divine master, in whatever ways the needs of men — our brothers and sisters — may demand. If we are sluggish and know that we are, and are discontented with our own lack of passion, then we are not quite dead, for the discontent which we feel mercifully comes from the divine principle within us; but, if we are complacent and self-satisfied in our sluggishness, and are walking through life buoyed up by personal conceit or the support of worldly conditions, we are to that extent dead, and the spirit of our existence is incompatible with the humility, and the power, and the joy, of

STAGNATION AND LIFE

the spirit of God. Let us, each one, look into our own hearts for a clearer vision of our aims and habits of life; and let us, in all humility, pray to our Heavenly Father for persistent earnestness in growing nearer to him, until our efforts shall be so purified that we shall recognize in ourselves at last the self-denying love and the unselfish passion which will make us the true, free followers of our Lord. Nothing can join us completely to him except the sharing of the spirit of his life, and the spirit of his triumph over death and self.

CHAPTER IX

Nerves and Civilization

IN all ages of the human race, beginning with the earliest prehistoric times, the fact of poetry stands out as a witness to the relation between the so-called inanimate things of nature and the inner life of the heart and mind. The mountains, the sea, and the expanse of sky, both by night and day, have from time immemorial illustrated the great facts of strength and breadth and all comprehensive unity to the mind of man; and the fact that men found these same ideas working themselves out as essential elements in their own lives gave

NERVES AND CIVILIZATION

rise to the deep significance of the beauty of nature. Hence poetry is the earliest language of the race, expressing, as it does, the joy of childhood in the discovery that the hills, and streams, and stars, can speak to man in the language of his own heart.

A great deal of the strain and nervous suffering of modern life is due to the fact that this ancient teaching of man by nature and through nature has fallen into disuse and comparative neglect. Poetry is no longer an essential part of human life as it was in primitive times. The connection between human life and that of the wonderful world around us has been monopolized by science and has thus become the special privilege of the few. As the particular field of highly trained and clever people, nature

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

has lost its significance as the great teacher of spiritual truth, and has been divided into endless compartments for the purpose of expert analysis, and thus robbed of its beauty and power as an organic whole.

As poetry has been the great link which has bound man's mind to nature by the power of beauty, so it has been the interpreter of that beauty to him in the form of spiritual truth. Where the leaven of Christianity and its lineal forerunner did not exist, this interpretation fell far short of religion, if we mean by that word the sense of responsibility or of honor which binds us to God; but, among the Hebrews, where, even in primitive times, the nation and the church were both founded upon this sense of responsibility, all the aspects of nature

NERVES AND CIVILIZATION

were full of the teachings of the Most High.

“The heavens declare the glory of God,” “the little hills clap their hands” and “the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea.”

The psalms and the prophets are full of joy at the loveliness and grandeur of the spirit of God as expressed in His works, and this joy can only be received in its fullness by the childlike and reverent in spirit.

Through the practical working out of the teachings of the gospel, in acting daily from a sense of obligation to what is higher than ourselves, and in acknowledging and casting off our sins and follies from day to day, the channels of the heart and mind are kept wide open to appreciate the spiritual meaning of

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

beauty in nature and the life-giving spirit of God behind it; and there can be no doubt that this loving appreciation and pure joy in things as God made them is nourishing and strengthening to the nerves as well as to the heart.

The worship of his own ingenuity by man and his thirst for achievement in merely imitating the workings of natural law in mechanical ways, — largely for purposes of material aggrandizement or destruction, — has led to the starvation of the race on its higher and simpler side of aspiration and reverence.

In Germany where the whole nation seems to be to the highest degree organized on scientific lines for the maintenance of its physical and intellectual power, both by industry and war, and where the children are trained from an

NERVES AND CIVILIZATION

early age, in competition with each other, to attain the highest possible standard of this sort of efficiency, the strain upon their moral natures is so great that their nerves frequently give way at an early age and there are annually recorded a number of child suicides.

It is not possible, when religion is made abortive by convention, and poetry is reduced to a clever artificiality, that the human heart can be satisfied with what remains in the form of domestic affection and patriotism. The pride of intellectual achievement in any line starves out the fundamental need of humility and worship, and this starvation results ultimately in contracting family affection to a mere solidarity of material and worldly interests according to a worldly code of honor.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

The inventions of steam and electric railroads have made it possible for people to live in huge cities where the skyline is reduced to a minimum, where forests and fields and streams are only memories, and where the social atmosphere of the street is frequently the condensed essence of everything that is destructive and degrading. Those who can afford country places in summer-time manage to make them as much like cities as they can by doing away with the sense of freedom and hospitality of the open land; and yet, in the interests of material prosperity itself, those who are wise in their own generation are raising the cry of "back to nature" or "back to the land" as the only real economic remedy.

But often the very people who are loudest in their demand for a return to

NERVES AND CIVILIZATION

the simple life would be the last to give up the amusements and distractions to which they have become accustomed in their city life. And, even if they were sincerely willing to make the necessary material sacrifices, they would find that the expected remedy would not be found in the life of the country and the open air alone.

Even the country and the open air can be spoiled by the social atmosphere of those who live there. The healing of the country—in addition to exercise and work in the open air—lies in the message of beauty which it carries to the eyes of those that can see and the ears of those that can hear. And, even then, it is possible to have keen eyes and ears and to enjoy the wonderful forms of life which are revealed to them, without catching the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

least glimpse of the strength and beauty they contain for the soul. Even intelligent and observing eyes and ears are too often the servants of the intellect alone and do not carry the deepest influences to the heart. Only the life commanded by our Lord can do this; for only by casting off what is destructive and useless, and by learning to love more what is good and life-giving, do we fall in with the rhythm of that divine life which exists alike in nature and in the soul of man.

The difficulties, the obstacles, the prejudices and the conventions which are the constant occasion for nervous weakness and stumbling cannot exist in the fresh air and sunshine of the spiritual life. Blessed are those who have been able to turn their sufferings to account as a means of deeper and truer living, as

NERVES AND CIVILIZATION

partakers of a larger life than their own, and as witnesses of the reality and eternity of the spirit.

In the growing appreciation of universal sympathy, and oneness with all God's works, both soul and nerves become receptive to nourishment and healing.

CHAPTER X

Social Pride and Contempt

IN every community there are a certain number of unfortunate persons who are born with the delusion that they are better than other people. This delusion has really nothing to do with class distinctions when considered as such; and, indeed, in countries where class distinctions are supported by the law of the land and centuries of custom, the spirit of snobbishness may not exist in so acute a form as it does in our own country, where the organization of society is theoretically supposed

SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

to be based on justice and individual merit.

Class distinctions may or may not be desirable, but there are dangerous moral errors and psychological weaknesses derived from the inborn assumption that "we are as good as anybody else and a little better."

The reason for mentioning class distinctions in connection with this very common and snobbish attitude is that they furnish an excuse and pretext for which no valid ground can anywhere be found.

It makes no difference to what we attribute the superiority which we claim for ourselves and those associated with us by ties of blood and social opportunity. The thing itself — the pride — the arrogance — the love of power — the in-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

solence — the servility — are vile, both from a psychological and a moral point of view, wherever they are found; and it makes no difference whether the false assumption is based upon superior cultivation, or wealth, or birth.

Of course this attitude is common in all classes and among all sorts of men, but less in communities where daily work is accepted as honorable and a matter of course than where men and women live in luxury and idleness. Moreover, it would seem to be worse in communities that rely upon the speculations of trade and unearned income than where income is the logical return for service rendered. Children have been known to turn their backs upon their fathers and mothers for the sake of protecting their positions in society, and no end of pettiness and base-

SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

ness is actuated by this meanest manifestation of human weakness.

The fact that people are born into a social atmosphere where a certain claim of superiority is accepted as a matter of course and as a just tribute to inherent worth, makes the poison of it very subtle and difficult to deal with. Many people live for years upon a tacit assumption of superior rank which they have done nothing to earn, without in the least suspecting that their good-natured condescension and familiarity with other people are without any real value or vitality. The cold shoulder that is calmly turned upon a fellow human being on account of some trivial irregularity of manner or appearance is just as deadly in its effect upon the soul of the snob as an outspoken expression of con-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tempt. But a very important difference is this, — because we are so familiar with our own sense of superiority, and because we are so in the habit of omitting or inhibiting the more human impulses of fellowship, the contempt and arrogance accumulate in our subconscious minds without our being aware of any such process; and such accumulations steadily and subtly undermine our faculty for love and generous service, upon which the health or wholeness of every human soul and every community must ultimately depend.

This spiritual disease, which expresses itself in this country by such absurd expressions as the “four hundred,” “nice people,” and the almost obsolete expression “polite society,” is one of the disintegrating forces which frequently results

SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

in nervous disease, when there is enough leaven of good to bring about a conflict in the consciousness.

Of course it is impossible to say how it compares in its weakening effects with other tendencies to sin, but it is in many ways more difficult to deal with than the coarser and more obvious vices. It is time that we, here in America at least, should separate the idea of good breeding and social gentleness from association with any such ungenerous and unlovely conventions as these. It is probable, although we seem so far away from the spirit of the gospel, that our civilization, such as it is, owes more to the spirit of Christian teaching than it does to anything else. It is true that all the saddest and most miserable facts of human life could be cleared away if men were to

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

follow our Lord's teaching in its simplicity and directness for one generation. Is it not time for those who feel that they enjoy social privileges and opportunities to turn their attention to their social standards? Should we let our children and our young friends admire the assurance of conscious pride and be drawn into the circle of its influence, without realizing the shocking discrepancy there is between such "well bred" assurance and the gentleness of modesty?

You may perhaps object: "But what a bore it would be if every one were modest and retiring, and we were deprived of the sparkle and wit of self-assertion!"

Yes, it would be a bore if there were nothing better to take its place. But, if cultivation and wit were under the con-

SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

trol of reverence and kindness, the sparkling society of the world would have no standing in comparison; in fact, even without cultivation or luxury, "good society" would be really good and happy if it were controlled by the reverence and kindness and truth of Christ.

There is a deeper and a happier cultivation than that of the intellect and imagination alone, and it has the power of spreading its happiness in a way that includes all within the reach of its influence; it comes about when the heart is cultivated with the mind and produces the vitality to which men of all kinds are compelled to respond. While the way of the "most exclusive" is toward self-gratification and death, the way of the most inclusive is toward a

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

finer and finer appreciation of the lasting loveliness of life. It only excludes those who can not, because they will not, follow; and its dignity can never be diminished, because it rests upon the worship of the Spirit which is power and dignity itself.

Let us realize that, when stripped of their delusive trappings and purely ephemeral attractions, the impulses of contempt and arrogance and servility are breeders of disease which must bear bitter fruit and cause deep pain before they can be unloaded from the suffering soul. The time will surely come for each one of us when the glamour of the world will fade away and leave these horrid things exposed to view in their nakedness. How we shall long then for the common human exchange and ordinary

SOCIAL PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

fellow-feeling which we had so long despised. After the glamour has gone, the coldness of dejection will have to be faced, and how happy will those be who are in a position to bring sunshine, — to warm the coldness, and to soften the hardness of the unhappy proud who will have turned servile in their misery!

These bringers of health, these courteous and gentle ones, who are strong and truthful in their ministrations, will then prove to be those who have taken the Lord's teaching as it was given and tried to practise it in daily life, feeling the great bond of human need all around them, and feeling also a common fellowship of happiness in their worship of his Spirit. Are not such as these — the followers of the Son of Man, who walked among men although he was the Son of

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

God — the true gentlewomen and gentlemen whom He needs to do His work? These have found out, through their own experience, the horror of contempt, and the grotesque travesty of unselfish love known as worldly good-breeding.

CHAPTER XI

Chastity

CHASTITY is supposed by the world to be a merely negative virtue:—merely not doing or saying or thinking unchaste things. But this apparent negative quality of chastity is only a shallow and false appearance; for chastity, like everything else, must be positive and vigorous in order to be truly real and have any life-giving power at all. Of course we can refrain from external acts of uncleanness, and from expressing unclean words, while the thoughts of our minds and the desires of our hearts are full of foulness and

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

corruption. There is not a speck or an atom of chastity in such a state as this; and, unless the desire in the mind and heart is cured, the corruption will break its bounds in course of time and express itself in outward act and word.

As a matter of fact, chastity represents the most powerful internal force of which human nature is capable. All the energy of life comes, of course, from the Father who is the source of all life. It is from his life that we derive the power to love or to hate. When we love unselfishly we receive his power as he gives it to us without perverting it; when we hate, we pervert the power of his life as we receive it, and turn it against him who gave it. But the power is his and from him just the same, whether we use it according to his will or against his will.

CHASTITY

It is from his life that we derive the power to think and understand; it is from his life that our hearts beat, and our lungs breathe, and our blood circulates; it is from his life that we have the power to use our bodies in the most external activities. All this life is goodness itself because it is the expression of unselfish love and useful wisdom; and, whenever we receive any of this love and wisdom into ourselves and, without perverting it, turn it into useful energy for the benefit of others, we are living straight from the Lord with spirit and power.

But the selfish and worldly love in which we are all born stands in the way of receiving the Lord's life purely and turning it, without perversion, into loving use. The heavenly life that comes

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

from above and is always knocking at the doors of our hearts, is entirely unselfish and true; but it comes up against our tendency to selfish love; and then, unless the selfish tendency is cleared away, the heavenly love cannot flow in without perversion. Thus it comes about that we must clean out the evil and selfish affections in ourselves, before we can receive unselfish power from the Lord in its fullness and purity. Hence we must do cleansing work before the true life from heaven can flow through us; nevertheless, the cleansing work is only a preparation, and the true life from the Lord is the real thing. We are preparing to receive life-giving chastity into our hearts and minds when we are putting out, as things that are evil, false, and unwholesome, all thoughts and de-

CHASTITY

sires in connection with sex, which are not filled with unselfishness and reverence. As we put such thoughts away as sins against the Lord, his creative power flows into our minds, and, through our minds, into our bodies. This creative power is chastity itself, and, on all planes of life, it is the most powerful influence known to man.

We see the effects of the Lord's creative life all around us. We see it in the life of the mountains and rivers and oceans; we see it in the woods and plants and flowers; in the winds and rain; in the myriad forms of animal life that inhabit the seas and the dry land; we perceive it in the planets and stars around us, for, if we watch, with our hearts at rest, we shall feel the awe of its presence in the beauty of the skies at night. All this

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

beauty is alive from nothing else but the creative power of God, — which is the union of the love of his great heart with the wisdom of his infinite mind; and, because all these forms of reception of the divine life have no choice in that reception, they have no power to pervert the life they receive; and hence these effects of beauty that our eyes see, and that our hearts respond to, are nothing else but the effects of universal chastity.

The power which we all have within us, to keep our hearts and minds and bodies clean and clear for the reception of this same creative life, is the inmost power of our nature; and thus, as we open to receive this life which the Lord is always sending us, we receive it as the inmost strength and foundation of all other life. As we put away all false,

CHASTITY

selfish, or frivolous ideas with regard to the relations of men and women to each other, we receive a strength for pure, unselfish love, and a loving reverence for order, which is the basis and foundation of human sanity and character. If our affections and our ideas are unselfish and reverent with regard to the processes of creative life in human nature, we have a sure foundation laid upon which to build a solid spiritual character. But, on the other hand, if the mind is unsound and the heart corrupt concerning these mysteries of our being, no external virtues or talents can do us any good, until the rotten foundation has been cleaned out and laid anew.

It is necessary to put away all that is evil and unclean, as sin against the Lord,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

but, in so doing, let us remember that we are receiving health and cleanliness themselves into the inmost of our characters as men and women. We may not shun uncleanness only because we do not want it, but because it is an insult to the Lord's creative life, the effects of which we see in all the power and beauty of the world around us, and by which we enjoy the dignity of being men in the image of God.

A knowledge of this principle is most valuable to young and old; and it is an especially happy thing when young people, as they are growing up, are guided to a true knowledge and reverence for its teachings. It is valuable for the single and for the married; and the angels in heaven must rejoice when a man and a woman consciously join in

CHASTITY

marriage, with a common love for the principle of unselfishness in all their relations to each other. Indeed, spiritually speaking, although men and women may be married according to civil and ecclesiastical law, there can be no true marriage of their hearts and minds excepting in proportion as they love and practise the principle of unselfishness and chastity. Without this, their marriage has no inward life, but must be like a body without a soul. There can no more be a marriage of souls without chastity, than there can be a fountain without water.

Just as the principle of chastity, or unselfish reverence for the relations of men and women, is the fountain of true, interior sanity and manhood, so is the opposite of it the most dangerous

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

and subtle poison to which poor human nature is exposed. It means corruption at the heart of things, and we need not dwell upon the suffering and deadly stagnation and shame to which its indulgence leads. It is the type of the worst and most brutal selfishness, whether we find it active, as it exists in evil men, or whether we find it in the form of the love of being admired, as it exists in careless women. But we need not follow it to its extremes to understand its true nature. In its beginnings it may take the form of apparently harmless frivolity; and it is the duty of every human soul to be vigilant against the subtle poison which is ready to creep in under frivolous and pleasant forms. This is the one subject of all others that no self-respecting man or woman can afford to treat lightly, for

CHASTITY

it involves our lowest possibilities for evil and wretchedness, as well as our highest possibilities for usefulness and joy.

We are taught that the plan of divine order is identical with the order of the human form. We are likenesses and images of God in so far as we keep our hearts loving and our minds true. But God is the original man, and our humanity is, at the best, but an image of the Divine Humanity. Not only that, but we are taught that the reason why we see our ideas reflected in natural objects, — the reason why we feel power in the mountains and strength in the sea, — and order in the whole outward universe around us, — is that their nature is based upon the same large principles of order that our human nature rests upon. That

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

same order exists in the organization of our minds, but only becomes manifest to the senses in the organization of our bodies. Hence it is that our bodies constitute a type or plan of divine order, — in themselves, in our souls, and in the visible universe around us. In treating our bodies and their functions with reverence, therefore, we are revering the order of the divine wisdom throughout creation; and, by the love of unselfish chastity, we are putting ourselves into direct communication with the stream of divine creative power. The love of the creative power and the recognition of and reverence for its divine order is sanity itself, for sanity and order are one.

CHAPTER XII

Spiritual Manhood

WHAT is an ideal state of Christian society? Is it a state in which intercourse is always smooth and pleasant, in which there is no criticism of one person by another, and in which all difficulties are adjusted by compromise or mutual concession? If this were an ideal state of Christian society — the state which would logically grow out of the practice of our religion — is it not a remarkable fact that the life of the Lord Jesus Christ presents so conspicuous a contrast to such an ideal? His life was neither smooth nor pleasant;

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

there is not a single word of his on record which can be interpreted as a mere politeness; he criticised the men of his generation without stint; and, above all, he never used pretty words for ugly things, but always called all things by their right names; he did not hesitate in his outspoken assertion of the truth through any fear of wounding the feelings or shocking the sensibilities of the men whose conscience he was working to arouse.

Conventional ideas of the Christian religion have given a very general impression that gentleness and tenderness are the most characteristic Christian qualities; but where, among the commandments do we find the injunction, "Thou shalt be gentle, thou shalt be tender, thou shalt never hurt the feelings

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

of thy brother"? Where, in the Lord's life, do we find the example of a single act in which mere gentleness is expressed without being indissolubly connected with the idea of law, of obedience to the commandments, or of the qualification, "As I have loved you"?

The fact is that human nature loves to call those things good which are pleasant to itself, and thus gentleness and tenderness are esteemed good because they are agreeable. In themselves they may be either good or bad, but they are almost always pleasant, and always convey to the superficial mind some sort of a suggestion of goodness. A man can often win his way with gentleness when violence would be simply ruin, but this is only a worldly commonplace. Gentleness and tenderness are quite as efficient

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

servants of evil as of good, and quite as often tend to undermine character as to build it up. There is the tenderness of the coward and voluptuary as well as of the hero and saint.

In accordance with the assumption that gentleness is a virtue in itself, we are often told that we should adjust our differences by compromise or mutual concession. And in teaching of this kind we sometimes do not immediately see through the mask of religious conventionality to the ordinary worldly wisdom beneath. We like to adjust difficulties by mutual concession because this is most frequently the easiest and cheapest way out of our troubles. Our poor human nature likes to follow along the line of least resistance — but we can find no compromises in the teachings of the

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

Lord our Master; nor can we find in his life and character the least trace of a tendency to compromise. To use a colloquial expression in a reverent spirit, "He was not that kind of a man," and that such teachings find general acceptance among his followers to-day proves how far we are from understanding and from incorporating into our own lives the vigor and independence of his divine manhood.

He healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day. By doing this he aroused the prejudices of the most respectable class of society. He might have waited twenty-four hours before doing his good deed without arousing nearly so much antagonism among the representatives of conventional law and order. He did not choose to wait twenty-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

four hours; but, looking upon the assemblage around him with indignation in his heart, he called out, "Stretch forth thine hand!" The hand was healed, the hatred and fear of the Pharisees was increased tenfold, but the principle was impressed upon the mind of the human race that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

It would have been impossible, of course, for our Lord to express in his words and life the new development of truth he brought into the world without exciting the antagonism of the persons and institutions who prospered by the perpetuation of falsehood. *It is one of the tests of the vitality of truth that it creates a ferment when it falls on sodden ground.* It could not cleanse, unless it first excited the social elements arrayed

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

against it. The instrument of truth may fall a victim to the prejudices which are aroused, but the truth itself takes new hold, strikes its roots deeper, and ultimately bears new and better fruit.

Left to itself human nature is gregarious both in matters of opinion and in standards of conduct. Worldly society is ruled by public opinion, and public opinion is the opinion of persons in the aggregate. Respectability is infectious, and so are selfishness and insincerity; and, apart from essential religion, there is no force which can raise our civilization beyond the standards of material well-being. The civil law is something more than a collection of personal opinions, having a distinct and recognized relation — however approximate — to the moral law, but this can only control the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

outward acts of men and women, and cannot seriously influence the motives and characters of men without an appeal to public opinion and worldly respectability as the ultimate moral standard.

If we divest religion of all its merely conventional appurtenances, we find that it introduces among men a force entirely distinct from any other, both in its origin and in its effects. For here we find the reign of law without any appeal to personal opinion. In so far as a man's conduct is based upon obedience to the law of righteousness from love to him who gave that law, and from love of righteousness itself, — in so far as a man is religious and no further. The unselfishness of the motive is just as important as the unselfishness of the act, so that the law must be kept in the

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

motive as well as in the act. In essential religion there is no obedience which is not obedience of the whole man — from his inmost thought to his outmost word and act; and it follows logically that he cannot do good for the sake of praise, or reputation, or profit, or good will, or a smooth and pleasant life, but only from love and obedience to his Father, — the All Good and Wise. In obedience, however, to his Father's command, he is to love and serve all other men — he is to further the interests of his brother as his own.

This implies a double relation — the one to a Divine Superior, the other to all men as brothers and as equals in his sight. Man's duty to God is loving obedience, his duty to his fellow-man is loving service and usefulness. His relation to his God is that of a child, and is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

concerned with commandments and principles; his relation to his brother man is concerned with usefulness in carrying out those commands in a friendly spirit. We must never lose sight of the fact that a true principle is divine law, and that our relation to such a principle is just as distinct from our relation to any mere human opinion, as our duty to God is distinct from our duty to man. If we confuse these things, which in their nature are as separate as the infinite is separate from the finite, we lose all clear guidance for our spiritual life. If we become respectful followers of human opinion as such, we cannot possibly appreciate and worship the beauty of divine law; and, if we are true followers of divine law, we cannot do our fellow-men the absurd injustice of worshipping at the shrine of

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

their mere opinions. Hence it is very important that we should early learn to recognize the difference between law and opinion, and give our whole allegiance to principles rather than to persons.

If we undertake to follow this path it will lead us directly into the realities of the spiritual life; for *there is only one way of learning to understand the meaning of a principle, and that is to act upon it in practical life.* The result of such an effort is to lead us to a recognition of the falsehoods and prejudices with which our minds are unconsciously burdened through love of self and of the world. When true principle — as distinguished from the leading of persons or opinions — is consistently followed, it has the same effect upon our hereditary evils and falsehoods as the words of our Lord —

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

when he healed the man with the withered hand — had upon the assembled Pharisees and scholars. It stirs them up so that we may become conscious of them and shun them as sins against him. The courage required to face the ugly facts thus presented to our attention with a whole-hearted sincerity is the beginning of spiritual manhood.

It is the beginning of the state of spiritual warfare by which alone life-giving power is acquired. But, if we persist in this course steadfastly for any length of time, we shall very soon find our activity opposed by influences outside of ourselves as well as within. The prejudices and selfishnesses which we first had to meet and combat in our own minds, we shall eventually have to meet in the minds of others; and thus will our

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

warfare be extended beyond the range of our own personalities to that of our social environment — in whole or in part. It is a hard experience when we find ourselves, for the first time, in an attitude of direct opposition to old friends whom we have looked up to in the past as embodiments of wisdom; and our only guarantee against delusion or self-deception is the fact that we are opposing in other people things which we have already fought against in ourselves, because we have found them evil and false. We cannot possibly fight against evil in others without fighting the same evil in ourselves; and thus we realize, more and more, that it is not persons we are opposing, but false principles as distinct from true. There is only one way in which we can determine whether a prin-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

ciple is true or not, and that is by testing it in our lives with a humble willingness to acknowledge our mistake if we find that we are wrong. The power to uphold true principle, after the necessary tests have been undergone, against the wilfulness or prejudice of other men, is a sign of the further development of spiritual manhood.

From the point of view of spiritual truth no affection can be called love that is not entirely disinterested; and therefore such love must be independent of the praise or blame, the respect or contempt, or, in one word, the opinion of men. We *can* love men in order that they may love us, but we *should* love them in order to give them the benefit of our own experience, and receive from them the benefit of theirs in learning to under-

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

stand and to carry out the commands of our Father. The root of the spiritual life is our relation to the Father, the branches and fruit reach out to men and women, — our brothers and sisters. When a man or a woman has begun the process of living from principles and not from persons, and has learned to welcome every criticism that may throw light upon his own character, he will find the greatest help in the loving coöperation of other men and women who are walking upon the same path.

We are all at least partially unconscious of our faults, even when we are painfully conscious of some of them; and if we can be lovingly guided to a fuller knowledge of them, this knowledge will enable us to repent and to become clean much more rapidly and vigorously

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

than when working along by ourselves alone. Guidance of this kind must be impersonal, unselfish, kindly, and reciprocal in spirit. It requires earnestness, sincerity, and a willingness to suffer for the sake of our obedience. It cannot always be called kindly in the ordinary sense, for it involves, at times, the loving infliction of pain — but never without the full and willing consent of the sufferer. Nothing can be further removed from such discriminating guidance than the ordinary faultfinding of the world. It may indeed express itself on the surface in similar words, but in its spirit, in its essence, and in its results, it is exactly the opposite. When two or three are gathered together in our Lord's name to work his will, the single bond which keeps them together, and which

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

enables them to do their work, is their common love of him, of his teachings, and of each other as his children. If one of them were to take the opinion of the others as law, their usefulness would cease and the ground of their fellowship would fall to the ground; but, when all are willing with perfect frankness quietly to discuss their personal opinions in the light of impersonal principle, their agreement is only a question of time and of willingness to put away all prejudices and ideas derived from selfishness and worldliness. Whatever spiritual work a man is willing and able to do in himself, that he is willing and able, when called upon, to help others to do in themselves; and the general willingness throughout a community to receive and to give criticism with affectionate and open

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

frankness, for the sake of truth, is the standard to which we are led as the ideal standard of Christian society.

When, as is most commonly the case, such willingness and openness do not exist, human nature is obliged to hide behind a general external good humor and politeness to protect itself from the impulses of meanness and falsehood which would otherwise flow out and shock public opinion; but, when they are steadfastly and sincerely permanent, we acknowledge the outward symptoms of evil that we do not want, in order that the evil itself may be clearly recognized and removed. A religious community in which this willingness and openness do not exist is only a worldly society with a veneer of pious custom and phraseology. No essential religion can exist among

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

men, excepting in so far as they subordinate their self-love, their vanity and pride — individually and collectively — to their love of understanding and of living the principles of unselfish truth. Without such subordination their personal interests, personal affections, the thousand pleasantnesses of domestic and social life, will inevitably tend to draw them away from the single-minded pursuit of useful service in obedience to their Father; but the measure of their spiritual manhood will be indicated by their power to distinguish between an easy subservience to persons and an arduous and difficult faithfulness to eternal principles.

The tenderness that flows out of this kind of love is all alive with the strength of the truth upon which it rests. It is a tenderness which does not depend upon

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

time or place or circumstance, for it is connected with the love of principles which are independent of all such considerations. It is the tenderness of love which cares for all children, instead of caring only for those who have been intrusted to our immediate care as parents. It feels the brotherhood of all men. It resents special privilege as injustice to the human brotherhood. It knows when to foster and to cherish; when to be patient and endure; and when to stand up and fight — or die.

✓ Voltaire said that the trouble with good people was that they were cowards; and, if we understand by “good people” the conventionally religious people, it would seem as if his remark were applicable to our own times. For, if we analyze the motives actuating the minds

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

of the conventionally religious, we shall find them largely tainted with selfish fear. We do not often form our decisions or lay our plans according to a clean regard for truth and service. Our plans and opinions are modified and moulded in a thousand ways by the effect that they will produce upon the minds of other men; and this not for their sakes but for the sake of the effect of their opinion upon us. Their opinions are largely made up of similar personalities and prejudices, and thus we find our sphere of usefulness limited not only by our own personal deficiencies of character, but by those of the friends to whom we bow in deference. This kind of reciprocal subserviency, although it keeps things smooth on the outside, is a most corrupting influence upon the well-springs of the spiritual life.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

It is infinitely better to have convictions of our own and to act upon them fearlessly — even if we incur certain outward failure — than to live along in mild concession, surrounded by the approval of those who would like to make either religion or no religion subservient to the ease and pleasantness of life.

Essential religion has nothing to do with this kind of ease and comfort. It is nothing at all, unless it is based upon the truth of principle as a matter of obedience to divine law, and not as a matter of worldly wisdom or human approbation. Although we must be careful not to make our brothers “to offend,” and must have due regard for the appearance of good, which to many of them is as yet the whole of their religion, yet far more important than this duty is that of

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

distinguishing between the living strength of life from obedience to principle — which is the life of our spiritual manhood — and the tame, subservient habit of following the examples and opinions of other persons for the sake of ease, expediency, human approbation, and personal influence.

From the spiritual point of view there is no compromise possible between these two courses — for the one means life and the other death. The tenderness that springs from regard for appearances and ease is weak and worldly; but that which springs from a sturdy love of principle, and the spiritual interests of our brother man, gives strength and life. *The essence of love is not tenderness, it is unselfish power*; and when true gentleness springs from this true source it comes

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

with life-giving dignity and grace. The gentleness that is so strong that it will die rather than give up the least particle of truth for the sake of any human consideration, comes from him who healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day; from him who taught us to love our enemies; to bless them that curse; to do good to them that hate, and to pray for them who persecute. This gentleness is only possible as the outward effect of great interior power. We cannot acquire it by imitation. Unless it is based upon a cheerful willingness to endure for the sake of the truth, it is but a forgery of what is at once the most lovely and the most powerful influence in life. The desire to please and to be pleased, with its concessions and compromises, can only lead us further and

SPIRITUAL MANHOOD

further away from the true gentleness which has its source in the truth and power of the Lord.

As we overcome our own selfishness we receive that divine power into our hearts; and, as we turn our backs upon the world, our hearts open with loving tenderness toward the needs of our fellow-men. We cannot keep one eye upon the righteousness of this world and the other upon the truth of God's kingdom; for this results in a feeble dishonesty of vision, which is foreign to the simplicity of spiritual manhood. It is only the strong and single-minded who can be truly tender.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.” (Isaiah xlii, 3.)

CHAPTER XIII

The Spiritual Life

ALL through his teaching, our Lord emphasizes the dual nature of man; he speaks to Nicodemus of a second birth, implying that man has two natures, — the one coming into being at the time his body is born into the world, and the other coming into being at some future time which is as uncertain as the direction of blowing gusts of wind. The second birth depends for its coming on the growth of man's inner spirit, and the state of that inner spirit, hidden away in the depths of his consciousness, can be fully known only to God himself.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

But, although the beginning of the spiritual life, or the time of being born of the spirit, cannot be certainly predicted for any human soul, our Lord's teachings on the one hand, and our own experience, on the other, provide clear principles for our guidance, as soon as our consciousness has become awakened to our spiritual responsibilities.

The journey through the narrow gate and up the steep ascent is not without its sign-posts and landmarks for the traveler; and, besides the great principles which are laid down for our guidance in the gospel, there are many little signs and marks along the roadside made for our benefit by those who have preceded us on the way.

The word "spiritual" has been so much abused, and has been employed so

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

much to represent ideas that are vague, dream-like and impractical, that it is important that we should make a special effort to grasp as clearly as possible its definite and specific meaning. In order to do this it will perhaps be well to say at the outset a few things which the word “spiritual” does not mean.

In the first place, although spiritual truth, when expressed in spoken or written language, is most appropriately and beautifully clothed in poetry — and of course we include under that head the Hebrew poetry of the prophets, which had neither rhyme nor rhythm in the ordinary English sense — nevertheless spiritual truth is not what we call poetry — poetry being merely the form through which it is often best expressed, and the

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

spiritual truth being the essence or spirit within the poetic form.

Then, again, spiritual truth is not the same as what we call intellectual truth; for the conclusions of the intellect are arrived at by observations of outward fact and by reasoning from those observations (or, as it is sometimes expressed, the intellectual faculty consists of inductive and deductive reasoning). Now this is not true of spiritual perception; although the intellectual faculty, with its power of observation and reasoning, is used as its servant, the spirit possesses a light of its own which it derives through its own experience from the use of the will in accordance with spiritual law.

Least of all is the spiritual faculty to be confused with the emotional sensations or forms of religious excitement

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

which are so often supposed to be the accompaniments of a lofty so-called spiritual condition. Just as the perceptions of the spirit are clear and keen in their own department of life, which is that of character and growth, so are its activities and energies quiet and powerful. If we want a type of the spiritual life taken from the world of nature around us, we should take the steady and quiet glow of the sunshine in the heavens rather than the sensational and brilliant fireworks of man's invention, — or should think of the stillness of deep waters far beneath the visible surface of the sea, rather than of the tumultuous waves on the top with their foam and froth lashed into fury by the restless winds. Noise and sensation and dramatic effect are things which are zealously cultivated by man in

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

his endeavor to give an effect of power which he frequently does not possess; but, even in outward nature around us, it is not the thunder-storms or the earthquakes that express the regular, normal, underlying power of life. These comparatively sensational manifestations of life make more of an impression upon us, for the very reason that they are exceptional and relatively infrequent. The great bulk of the power that is carrying the immense burden of physical life by which we are surrounded is as steady and silent as it is powerful and majestic.

The spiritual life comes when we begin to long to live in accordance with God's will rather than our own — steadily and quietly — and then we try to live in such a way as to receive his spirit into ourselves; thus our lives become harmo-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

nized with the life of his spirit outside of ourselves, or the underlying life of God's world all around us.

It is a great joy when we first begin to realize with conviction the fact that Divine Power, with all its omnipotence and majesty, is, for the most part, quiet, and clear, and gentle in its operations. And then, believing as we do that this same Divine Power — in so far as we can grasp its nature at all — is pure, unselfish love and unprejudiced truth resulting in all the abundance and fruitfulness of life, it is a wonderful and satisfying thing to associate all that quiet, gentle, omnipotent power with our ideas of human sincerity and love. This is as near as we can get to a definition of the spiritual life. It is the kind of practical life which enables us to receive into our

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

wills and intelligences a certain small measure of this divine unselfishness and truth, and to act it out in our daily lives in accordance with the will of our Father in heaven.

If we were born with a ready-made consciousness of our relation to God, and with a loving desire to find our happiness in ways of his choosing rather than our own, there would be no pain, struggle, or difficulty in learning to live the spiritual life, — there would be no need of “being born again.” But we need the discipline of working out of the natural state of self-love and worldliness into the larger life, in order to give us the strength which we shall be called upon to use hereafter. Hence it comes about that our life here — whenever growth is active and normal — consists of continually

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

casting off certain affections, ideas, habits, and impulses which belong to our natural state, because we find that they are not worthy of the higher standard which is already within the reach of our understanding and reverence, although not yet completely in the grasp of our will.

This process of casting off old things for the sake of receiving new life is what John preached when he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance is not necessarily a painful thing to go through; it is not to be confused with the sorrow of humiliation and wounded pride. These latter are painful states which succeed times of sinful indulgence, but may or may not be accompanied by true repentance. In proportion as repentance is wholesome and un-mixed with morbid self-reproach, it be-

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

comes more and more of a daily habit of the will. As time goes on it ceases to be painful to find out where we have done wrong, because we associate the discovery with an increase of light. While the Gospel teaches us that we should aim at perfection, it also clearly shows that man in himself is not perfectible. From our very nature we are always dependent upon the inflow of light and life from a source higher than ourselves; and the degree with which we grow depends largely upon the humility with which we recognize our own personal inferiority to this higher power. While in the natural and worldly life we can get along very well without humility, it is impossible for us to do so in the spiritual life, because humility is nothing more or less than common sense and intelli-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

gence in recognizing our true relation to God.

Self-knowledge and repentance, then, are the first steps along the steep and narrow path which we call the spiritual life. It is described as steep and narrow because of the disposition of our natural minds to resist the operation of the Divine Spirit. Our first discoveries in self-knowledge are always bound to be painful; and, if we happen to have a good share of pride or vanity in our disposition, it is apt to be humiliating as well. But, when the first discoveries in self-knowledge have been made — when, for instance, we have found out through some searching crisis of life, that we are not as clear in our honor, as clean in our chastity, or as unselfish in our relations to others as we had always taken for

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

granted — when these discoveries first dawn upon a newly awakened layer of intelligence and a deepening faculty of conscience, and we turn at once to the task of strengthening all the weak places in our character by a stricter and more loving obedience to God, the mortification of self in time gives way to a new and invigorating sense of increased energy and life. But we get to know our own particular selfish nature in proportion as we overcome it; and, in course of time, the self-knowledge thus acquired serves as an enlightening foil or contrast to the goodness and truth which we worship in God, and from which we draw our supply of spiritual life which, with faithful work on our part, continually increases both in delicacy and power. The way in which we open to receive the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

power of this new life, when we have once acquired the habit of daily repentance and increasing self-knowledge, is by concentrating all our powers both of will and of intelligence upon prayer and action in its broadest sense. By praying for the good and truth, for the unselfishness and sincerity in which we find ourselves lacking; — and by determined and repeated efforts to carry out our new standards in detail in the specific acts of daily life, we open our faculties of will and of intelligence to receive the inflow of the Spirit.

The pain of the spiritual life must vary with individuals according to the depth and persistency of their inheritance of evil, and according to the amount of self-indulgence during their past lives. When habits are deep-seated — and especially when they have gained control

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

over the nervous system — there must necessarily ensue a long process of change, fraught with pain and weakness, before the whole system can be fully restored and put upon a sound basis.

But, whether the change from natural to spiritual life be more or less painful, the pain must in all cases give way in time to a new joy which is beyond the comprehension of such as know only natural happiness, and which is a foretaste of life in the spiritual world.

CHAPTER XIV

The Spiritual World

IT is a mistake to think of the spiritual world or the spiritual life as something which will only begin to exist when these natural bodies of ours have died. We all have our roots in the spiritual world already, or it would be impossible for us to live as we do now; for all this world of sense in which we consciously move draws its life and power from that other world of which we are at present for the most part unconscious.

The spiritual world, therefore, is the world of causes, while this visible world about us is a world of effects, but it is

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

only through our own hearts and minds that we can penetrate into the world of causes. We do this by living according to the underlying principles of life which have been taught to the human race in various forms for thousands of years in the past, but which have been most fully revealed by the life and teachings of Christ. When we live according to the principles which he taught, and still more when we have practised these principles long enough to realize their power for human happiness, we are then living in a way which opens us most fully to the reception of spiritual forces and influences from the spiritual world, and this also opens our minds to an appreciation of what that work and what that life really are.

But we must remember that there is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

evil as well as good in the spiritual world; and that, when we will, and think, and do evil in this world, we are attracting to ourselves evil influences from the spiritual world. I remember some one coming to a friend of mine and describing the fits of passionate anger to which she was subject. She said that they were like a blast of burning air that seemed to blow through her and compel her to say angry things. My friend quietly turned to her and said, "Why, that is just what they are, — they are burning blasts from hell." The woman's anger, which she had not yet learned to control, attracted by its peculiar vibrations evil influences of the same kind in the spiritual world, so that her own evil impulses were reinforced and strengthened until she herself had no control over them whatever.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

This seems to be what always happens when we lose our self-control from any selfish impulse; and it is not only the case with the more violent passions, but also with the chronic, lazy, and indolent habits of self-indulgence to which we are prone. We attract to ourselves just the same quality of evil or good in which our own spirits are; but there is this difference between the evil influences and the good ones, that the evil influences are violent, or vindictive and tyrannical, while good influences are gentle, and quiet, and delicate in their operation.

When we realize that the power of our life is derived from the spiritual world, whether for good or evil, we begin to feel that our interest in it affects our interest in the present even more than it does our concern for the future.

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

Of course every one is interested in the question of immortality, but that question really settles itself when we begin to understand the fact that we draw our life from the spiritual world at the present time. Our Lord gave us certain principles of action which we were to follow in accordance with his example; and, as we get genuinely interested in practising these principles of life, we become more and more conscious of the fact that our souls are living in the spiritual world at the present time; and that our spiritual life, although of course controlling our natural life, is nevertheless quite distinct from it. Although our spiritual life very largely affects the states of our bodies, we nevertheless feel that it is independent of our bodies; and that, when the time comes to lay aside our bodies as we would a suit

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

of clothes that is worn out, our spiritual life will go on about the same. But with this difference, that we shall be relieved of the weight and the associations of our natural bodies; and that, if our characters have become strong and our spiritual life vigorous, we shall gradually emerge into an atmosphere more congenial to us than that which we have left behind. Thus the sense of the existence of a life after death is more a matter of perception resulting from obedience to the Lord's commandments and his spiritual principles, than it is a matter of scientific investigation or inquiry.

He said of course that immortality was true; that God is the God of the living and not of the dead; and that in his Father's house are many resting-places; but he took no pains to argue the matter,

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

as far as we know, and it was as if he said: "Love one another as I have loved you," "repent," "he that keepeth my commandments he it is that loveth me;" if you do all these and travel along this road, your eyes will be opened and you will see that you are already in the life eternal.

If we should inquire what is the best way of becoming confirmed in the spiritual life, so that we may be conscious of ourselves as spirits living in eternity rather than as natural men living only in time, — and so that all the things belonging to eternity may seem to us more important and real than those things which belong to the life of our senses alone, it would probably be safe to answer that the *only* means of doing this is by overcoming temptation.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Our temptations are the landmarks of our spiritual growth or decline; for in temptation we have to choose between good and evil, and it is only in temptation that we come into real contact with evil; while, at the same time, by overcoming the evil, we come into real and actual contact with good. We may talk about evil without knowing really anything of it from our own experience, and we may talk about good in the same way; but we cannot overcome temptation without going through a process which teaches us the actual reality of good and evil, and of the difference between the two. Thus it is that, when temptation has been overcome, the will is strengthened because it has done real work, and thus attracts good and strengthening influences from the spiri-

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NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tual world. With these good and strengthening influences of power comes a finer perception of the truth, and for this reason we never understand any evil thing more thoroughly than when we have conquered it in temptation; nor can we appreciate fully the power of good until we have actually felt it working in our hearts in the process of overcoming evil.

There are people who think that knowledge of evil comes from yielding to temptation, but this is not true, because the evil itself stupefies the mind and dulls the conscience; it is the man or woman who has been tempted and who has conquered who knows most about both good and evil and understands their true significance. The worldly man knows less than anyone about the world as it really is.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Thus every temptation conquered opens the way for a more ample inflow of life and power from the spiritual world, and this increased life and power makes us just so much better able to meet the next temptation and to do our work and be of use to one another. For the more firmly our feet are planted upon the spiritual foundation of our lives the better instruments we shall be of the Lord's love and wisdom among men. When we yield to temptation, on the other hand, we are attracting all the influences which tend to keep us in evil and are making it harder for us to succeed when the time comes that we really desire to be free. This genuine awakening of the spirit comes at different times with different persons, and often does not begin until the consequences of evil or

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

carelessness have become unendurable; then, when we can no longer bear the torture which our weakness has brought in its train, we first cry to our Father for deliverance — not because we love him or want to do his will, but because we cannot bear the suffering which our disobedience entails. But our Father welcomes his prodigal child even though he may turn homeward at first only to escape from the misery of his distress. Obedience, however, never fails to bring life into the heart, and gradually the poor slave, who at first would only do right for the sake of avoiding punishment, is raised to the position of a *child*, who, though often rebellious, trusts his Father and knows that in the end his divine will is best. He grows in this way by overcoming temptation; and, as he grows,

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

his spiritual perceptions are awakened, until he begins to understand his true relation to God, his utter dependence upon him, the beauty of the commands which he imposes, the loveliness of his will, and the condition of immortality in which his spirit lives.

The scheme of life, of which the idea of immortality is a part, is a deep, and true, and large scheme of life which is not seriously taken account of by the world. The world lives, as we know, as if the immortal life were a pleasant theory regarding the future, but not immediately connected with present practical affairs. The world's scheme of life does not really include anything but the visible life of the body; and its standards of what is worth while, or what is worth having, are based almost entirely

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

on material and temporary considerations. But although, when we are young, our present life seems practically unlimited in the future, those of us who have passed the turning-point of middle life, keep realizing more and more how short what we call a lifetime really is; and all the young people will pass the same turning-point, before long, while we are in what are called our declining years. They are declining years of growing weakness, according to the world's scheme of life; but, in the light of the spirit, we can perceive that they are also the beginning of a new chapter in our lives in which only God's great and eternal scheme of life will be taken into account.

When once we are fully and seriously started upon the path of interior development taught us by our Lord Jesus Christ,

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

we shall, as time goes on, feel the strength of his spirit constantly renewing our youth in preparation for the time when we shall all be as little children;— not as little children in ignorance of evil, but as mature little children who are in the innocence of wisdom.

“ He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

If we firmly take our stand upon spiritual principles now, it will save us much labor and much suffering in the future when the time comes that we shall

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

no longer have the power to choose, when all things that are hidden shall be revealed, and when we shall all be tried and tested — not according to the world's standards of what is agreeable or proper, but according to God's standard of things as they are.

CHAPTER XV

Genuine Love

THERE are as many kinds of love as there are kinds of people; but we have an absolute standard of love given to us in the New Testament, which is that we should love one another as our Lord has loved us, and is loving us to-day and every day.

The first characteristic of our Father's love is its unselfishness. He is love itself, and does not derive his love or life from any other source or being. He himself is the source of all love and life, and he is giving himself out all the time to the whole of his universe, of which we, his

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

children, are a part. Because this giving out of his own life to others continually is absolutely unselfish, therefore it is absolutely steady and permanent.

“ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

We, in our selfish weakness, find it comparatively easy to love those who treat us well, and our love for our fellow-men varies according to our likes and dislikes, and according to the way in which people respond to our love. But the love of our Father is steady and strong, and does not depend on the way in which it is received. Its operation for joy and usefulness among men *does depend on the way men receive God's love into their hearts and lives*; but the heart

GENUINE LOVE

of God himself is just as loving in its affection for the evil as the good — for the unresponsive as the responsive. It is like the steady warmth and light of the sun, which is always radiating and shining above the clouds; our selfish affections are the clouds that stand in the way of our receiving God's love; but this love itself is always there, and, no matter how many clouds may prevent the passage of pure warmth and light to the earth below, they can never stop the shining in the sky above.

It is the greatest mistake to imagine for one moment that the evil and unhappiness in the world is the result of any inequality in the love of God — the love of the Father constitutes the very life of us all; “but the life that flows in is received by every one according to his

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

character; good and truth are received as good and truth by the good; ” while by the evil and selfish the Lord’s good and truth in them is changed into evil and falsity. “ It is comparatively like the light of the sun, which diffuses itself into all objects upon the earth, but is received according to the quality of each object, and becomes of a beautiful color in beautiful forms, and of an ugly color in ugly forms.”

We are placed here on earth for the sake of being changed from the state of natural men, who are in the love of self and of the world, into that of spiritual men, who are in the love of God and the neighbor; or, in other words, the love of our lives must be changed from a selfish and worldly love to that of an unselfish and neighborly love; and this

GENUINE LOVE

means that we must learn to put aside all the obstructions which prevent us from receiving the Lord's divine, unselfish love into our own hearts, as his little children, and giving it out in loving service to our fellow-men. When we become clear channels of our Father's divine, unselfish love, the ruling love of our lives becomes spiritual love and we become spiritual men.

When we are in the natural love which belongs to our animal nature, we love those who love us, but we are apt to hate those who hate us; we are apt to love the people whom we like, but are cold and hard, and indifferent to those whom we dislike. The sin, and wickedness, and unhappiness of the world is due to our not keeping our hearts clean and open to receive God's love in its

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

purity; and, because we all of us inherit a tendency toward selfishness and worldliness, we must learn to put all that aside as an obstruction to life, — as sin against God, in order to be able to receive and transmit His love and vitality in its purity and strength.

When we are in merely natural love, we love our own children, sometimes passionately, but we are more or less indifferent to the children of other people; we love our own with a sense of greedy possession, as extensions of ourselves, and we love all that they contribute to our parental pride and satisfaction; but, when we have recognized this sort of personal and family *love of possession* as selfish and greedy, and have shunned it as sin, then we begin to love our children with a better spirit. We

GENUINE LOVE

learn to recognize and respect their individuality as children of the Father, we begin to regard ourselves as trustees for our children and to realize that we are responsible for them to the Father of us all; while leading our children to obedience to the commandments, and requiring of them a proper respect for law, we do not impose our own wilfulness upon them. Thus we make it easy for our children to grow out of natural dependence, which is necessary in childhood, into a state of voluntary obedience to the law, the love of which is freedom itself. Then, as they grow up, our relation as their parents will be changed to a more fraternal relation, as we all grow into the love of obeying the same principles together. The reciprocal respect for each other's freedom

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

which such unselfish friendship requires lays the foundation for eternal friendship in the life to come. An unselfish love for our children which recognizes their individuality and respects their point of view, while always requiring a reverent obedience to law, extends in spirit beyond the limits of the family, to all the children with whom we come into relations of helpful service. Thus it may be proved that, by putting away the over-personal and selfish quality of our affections, our love is broadened and enriched both in its quality and scope, and comes nearer to the quality of our Father's love for us, which knows no invidious discriminations or favoritisms and has "no variableness nor shadow of turning."

The creative power of God and his

GENUINE LOVE

Providence are working unceasingly on all the planes of life to bring about productiveness and usefulness according to the divine laws of order; and we cannot learn to love each other as our Lord is loving us, unless we learn to love, from our own free choice, these same laws of order which are necessary to the blessedness and beauty of life. True spiritual love is that which flows into our hearts from the Father, while the loves of self and of the world are being cast out; and this spiritual love is what is spoken of in the Bible as charity. It is a very different thing from any of the forms of natural affection with which we are born, for we can only learn and receive true charity by overcoming temptation. This is what gives it its peculiar strength, and breadth, and permanence; for it is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

that good which flows into the will, and makes the will strong, when the opposite evil is being overcome and shunned as sin against God. We have the description of charity given us in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, and he speaks of it as the one indispensable gift of the Christian life:

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me

GENUINE LOVE

nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

The strength, and gentleness, and patience of charity, or spiritual love, comes from the fact that it is not a love of the emotions alone, but an unselfish love of the will, — it suffers long and is kind, because it has overcome the temptation to impatience and resentment; it does not vaunt itself, and is not puffed up, because it has overcome the temptation to conceit and arrogance; it does not behave itself unseemly, because it has

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

overcome the temptation to disorderly carelessness; and so on, — by constantly overcoming the temptations that present themselves in the natural man, the inner or spiritual will is steadily strengthened, until it can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things; and thus it is seen to possess the qualities of our Father's unselfish, steady, and permanent love from which it is derived. It is the Lord's love in our own hearts, which he gives us when we obey him by overcoming and casting out all the things that are against his grace and truth; and, with his love in our hearts, we can love each other as he has loved us.

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

CHAPTER XVI

Summing Up

TO sum up the subject, it would seem that the hyper-sensitiveness and suffering induced by nervous weakness furnishes, as it were, a magnifying-glass by which we may be taught to recognize our own selfishness and worldliness, which are otherwise covered up by the mask of moral dullness and complacency characteristic of the average social life around us.

If this self-revelation is accepted with as little resistance and rebellion as possible, from obedience to the spirit of Chris-

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tian teaching, a new clearness of vision gradually takes the place of the confusion which is apt to accompany nervous suffering. When we acknowledge our faults for the sake of correcting them with the least possible delay, and so changing our habits of mind and life, the self-knowledge so gained furnishes the key to a knowledge of other men, and so unravels many tangles and makes life much simpler and happier.

An interesting fact about this new point of view is that it springs more from a change of heart — a more unselfish spirit — than it does from any intellectual change of opinion; and indeed the new point of view can be held in common by people of very various and differing opinions — even on the subject of religious faith.

SUMMING UP

There is a spirit of tolerance characteristic of the Gospel which emphasizes the relative importance of unselfish and affectionate service as compared to mere matters of opinion. It suggests strongly the idea that our Father cares more about our obeying him in our relations to each other, than about our opinions concerning himself from a theological point of view. Disinterested obedience implies love, and true love brings with it its own light of faith.

Ministers (or priests) have come for help with sick nerves and have proved that for years they had been "resisting evil" and disobeying Christ's teaching without realizing it; and yet they were keenly conscious of errors of doctrine on the part of those who did not profess their particular creed. A weak and blind

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

tolerance of sin seems to accompany intolerance of opinion.

Surely, if the churches were alive with the spirit of Christ — with the presence of the “ Comforter ” — they would have it in their power to ease some of the physical as well as spiritual sufferings of men. But many people are finding out that, for the most part, the churches have no such power, and that it is only as the individual soul personally follows and obeys the teachings of Christ, that he gets the help which the Gospel promises. He may be a member of this church or of that, or of no outward organization at all; if he loves God and serves the neighbor, he is, by that very fact, a member of that Universal Church which is the “ body ” of Jesus Christ. Many men are leaving the churches

SUMMING UP

because they do not find in them the spiritual nourishment which they need; and, this is largely because their worldliness robs them of spiritual power.

The Churches seem *to have forgotten that worldliness is a sin*; and yet our Lord recognized its organized pride and selfishness, and declared that it is impossible to serve both God and Mammon.

We find different sets of churches with differing characteristics of worldliness, varying from the "family pride" of the "Apostolic succession" to the greed of political power. Individuals in all churches practically demonstrate in their lives the simplicity and affectionate sincerity of Christ's teaching, but how can ecclesiastical organizations convey the fineness and power of the Spirit through

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

machinery which has become coarse and material?

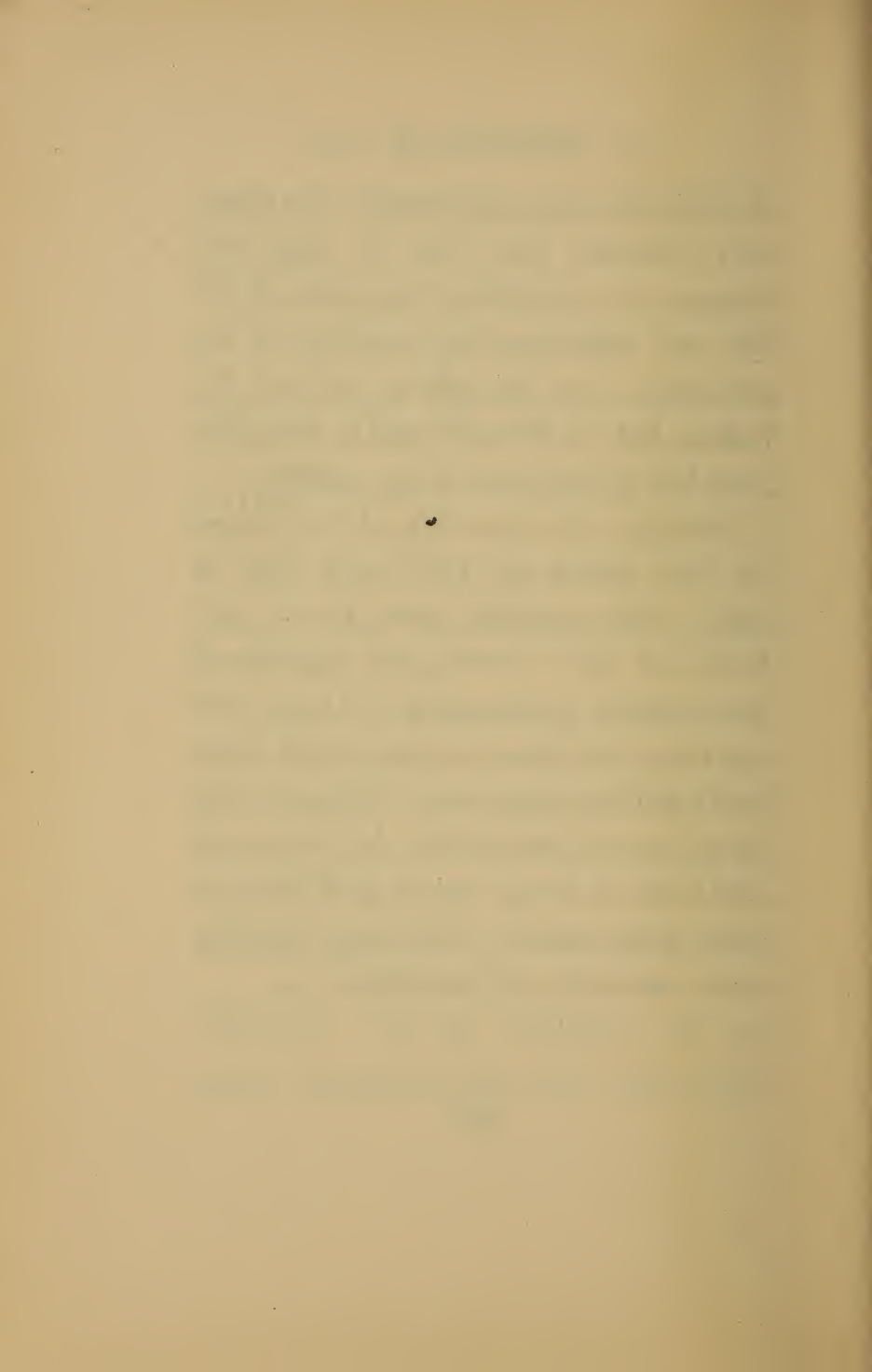
Pride is quite as hostile to the spirit of Christ as sensuality, and yet the churches pride themselves on their superiority to each other from a historical, or intellectual, or social point of view. How far are they from the standard of the Lowly One who preferred to be rejected of men that he might do his duty as the Son of God!

Surely, one of these days, it will manifestly be seen that the churches are right in so far as they radiate the spirit of Christ's loving tolerance and respect for men, and that they are wrong in so far as they uphold the spirit of exclusiveness and pride which was characteristic of the Pharisees. In the meantime all who strive to acknowledge and repent daily

SUMMING UP

of their sins may join hands — to whatever churches they may or may not belong — in upholding the spirit of his life and radiating the sunshine of his presence, — not by talking and not by feeling, but by *doing* his will in daily life *from love of him and of one another*.

Surely, in the humility of the Gospel we get nearer to God; and that is why — when weighed down by the suffering of sick nerves — we understand and respond to his words: “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” And with humility come gratitude and happiness.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX

IT must be remembered that the exercises given below are only useful as means to an end — but as such they are, for a certain time, essential.

If we drop contractions of the body, which have been made by resistances of the mind, merely to make way for new contractions as the effect of new resistances, we are only cleaning our house that it may be occupied by “other spirits worse than the first.”

To drop the contractions in the arms:

(1) Sitting position. Raise each arm heavily from the shoulder; and, when it is

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

raised to a horizontal position in front, let it drop heavily.

Repeat this until you have a sense of your arms lying quietly in your lap — by their own weight. Try to listen to or talk with others without the slightest contraction in your arms.

(2) To drop the contractions in the back of the neck and spine.

(a) Drop the head forward very slowly and heavily, letting it “melt” — like a wax candle in a warm room — when the chin is resting on the chest let the head hang there heavily — growing more and more heavy — for about a minute — and then bring it up very slowly, with a loose jaw; and, when it is erect, take a long breath through the nose. Repeat this exercise three or four times.

(b) When the head has been dropped

APPENDIX

as far as it can be comfortably, let its weight seem to carry the body forward — but do not bend from the hips, for then the spine will not be properly stretched. When the head and body have dropped as far as they will, let them stay in that position for about a minute and then begin and raise them *very slowly* as if the motive power were in the seat of the chair — or down cellar — or in the middle of the earth. Do not raise the head until the chest is as high as it can be without the head's coming up. When erect take a long quiet breath.

(3) To drop the contractions in the legs.

Lie flat on the back and draw each heel up, slowly bending the knee and feeling the effort entirely in the hip. When the knee is bent so that the sole of the

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

foot is resting entirely on the ground, let the leg swing from side to side loosely from the hip — and then very slowly push the foot down until at last the leg drops loosely to its full length. This exercise should be done with each leg, alternately, but not with the two together. It should be repeated several times.

(4) To loosen all inner contractions by means of deep breathing.

Lie flat on the back — on the hard floor, if possible — settle heavily and inhale a long, quiet breath through the nose; open the mouth lazily and exhale through the open mouth, as if trying to melt something; then bring the lower jaw up slowly and loosely while you breathe naturally through your nose. This exercise should be repeated in a leisurely way for fifteen minutes.

APPENDIX

There should be a sense of leisure in all the motions — drop every thought and every interest except the exercises, and make somewhat of a ceremony of them, — the idea being to gain so strong a sense of quiet and of healthy relaxation that you can recall it whenever it is needed throughout the day or night. A steady practice of the exercises takes one toward a normal equilibrium and makes one more and more sensitive to the unnecessary tension which is always the physical cause of nervous illness — and, as one establishes a standard of quiet and ease, and grows sensitive to all opposite states, the ability to recall the standard acquired by means of the exercises grows, so that sooner or later the brain works almost automatically; that is, strain, instead of as heretofore breeding more

NEW NERVES FOR OLD

strain, becomes a reminder to the brain to relax.

Only the most fundamental exercises for relaxation are here given — there may be hundreds more, but all would be derivatives of these. There are also exercises for rhythmic motions of the body, but those cannot easily be described in words, and are not necessary to such a work as this — for if we get free from the superfluous tension in our bodies, and out of all strain, Nature takes care of our equilibrium in motion; and then also — or indeed first — if the body, through dropping its physical contraction, is made to be a responsive servant, the attitude of the heart and mind bring it into rhythmic action.

The exercises in relaxation are a necessity, — if we want to overcome the ab-

APPENDIX

normal habits of nervous tension, — but those in rhythm and motion, without being absolutely necessary, are pleasant and helpful.

THE END

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IN this volume Miss Call states another law which is much more important than that given in "Power Through Repose," the author's first work, which greatly benefited hundreds of readers.

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MISS CALL'S first book was written mainly with the aim of showing men and women how to throw off their strain in the mechanical actions of their lives and to live and move more as if they were oiled, — more as nature intended they should live and move. In fact, "Power through Repose" represents the rudiments of healthy nerve training, and, although it touches on mental causes, it does so very slightly.

In his "Talks to Teachers on Psychology," Prof. William James termed the subject of this book *the gospel of relaxation* and said that "it ought to be in the hands of every teacher and student in America."

AS A MATTER OF COURSE

IN this, her second book, Miss Call goes more deeply into mental causes of nervous strain. She recognizes that there are certain simple relations of every day life and simple circumstances, which men and women have been in the habit of meeting with strain, when a very little attention to the subject would enable them to see the unnecessary burdens they were carrying and to cast them entirely aside.

Our most simple relations to others and to the circumstances of life could be kept well oiled, *as a matter of course*, if we once went to work with deliberate and well aimed attention to change our habits.

THE FREEDOM OF LIFE

UNDERLYING all this are great principles of life. Here is where the nerves touch the soul on the other side, and where the perverted character of the man who wants only his own way, or the universal habit of fear, keeps the

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nerves in such a strain that these principles, which are just as much fixed laws as any law of physics, cannot work through him.

Man is trying to live and be happy in disobedience to law. He can no more really do it than he can make water run up hill. It is more in ignorance of these principles than in wilful disobedience to them that most people suffer, and Miss Call wrote "The Freedom of Life" to enlighten all who would listen as to the cause of mental strain and how to drop it.

EVERY DAY LIVING

THIS book is valuable, more because it takes examples from real life, examples of people who have suffered from nervous strain in the work of their lives or in their relations with others, and all because of their ignorance of the real cause of their pain.

When one sees and understands the principle underlying these concrete examples, it is as simple to find and use the right remedy as it is to stop a baby's crying by finding the pin that was pricking it.

NERVES AND COMMON SENSE

CONCRETE examples of how *the laws work* and results gained from obedience to them are of the most practical service in illustrating such useful principles as Miss Call has put before the world, and in her latest book, "Nerves and Common Sense," concrete examples are multiplied without repetition in a way that must carry conviction to any listening mind.

Anecdotes are told in which every day problems are put vividly before us and those same every day problems are practically solved. People all about us are suffering unnecessarily from nervous strain and nervous illness which could

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be so entirely relieved that they might, so to speak, throw off their strain and attend to the business of life with a free and living interest, if only they would appreciate the validity of these simple laws which Miss Call explains and illustrates with such remarkable clearness.

MISS CALL'S BOOKS AS A WHOLE

Every word she writes has a practical value, and her five books, although they all relate to the one subject, approach it in ways so different that each one of the five books helps to a better understanding of the other four. They lead from one to the other as one would naturally be led from the first discovery of a law to a wider and deeper understanding of its application. They show the way to human freedom, they are full of good sound A B C sense, and can lift the burdens from many thousand men and women.

A FEW OPINIONS

"Power through Repose" ought to be in the hands of at least eight out of every ten men and women now living and working on this continent. — *The Outlook*, New York.

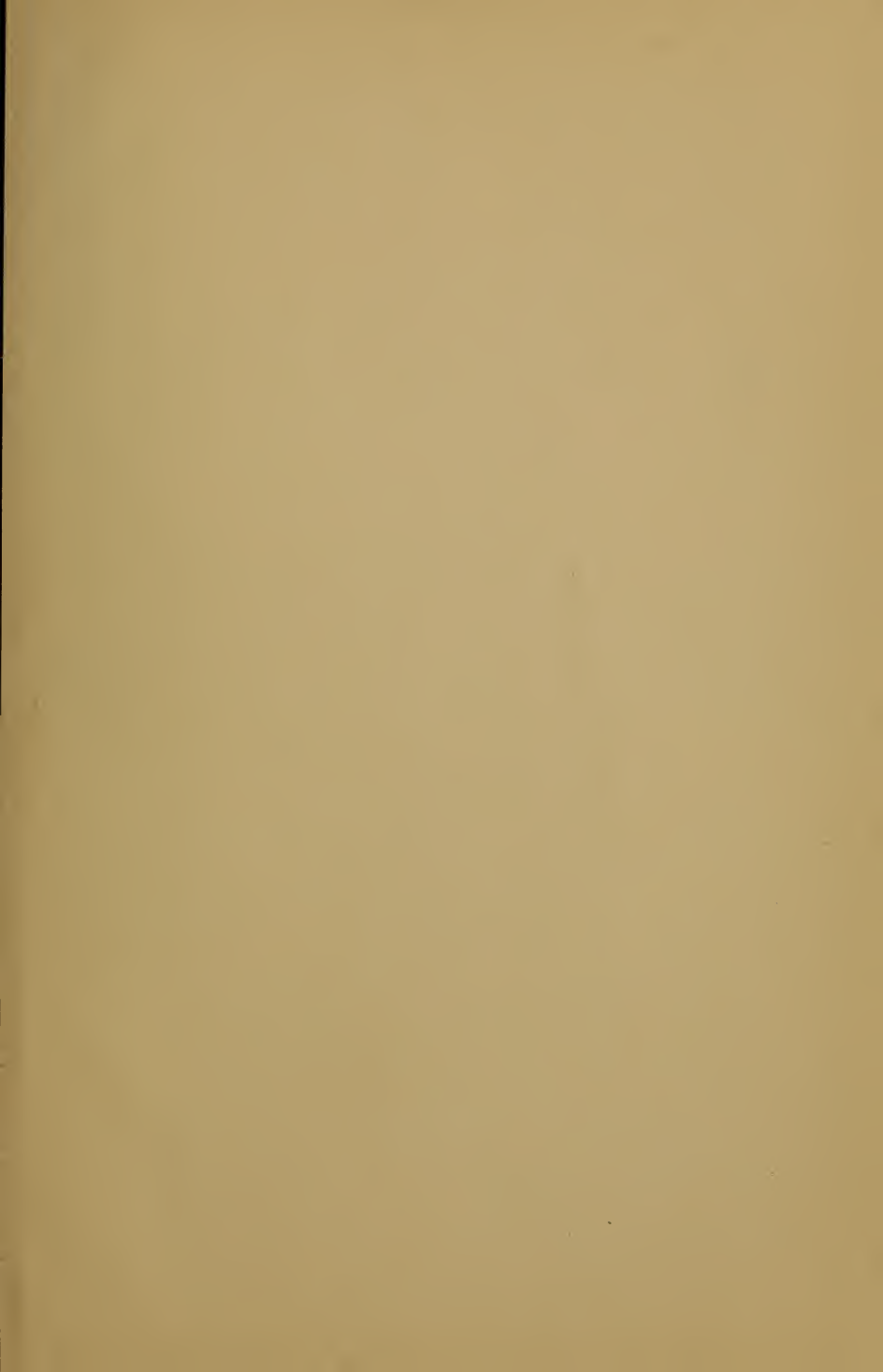
"As a Matter of Course" is to further help nervous sufferers along the road to well-being and is rich in restful suggestions. — *Boston Transcript*.

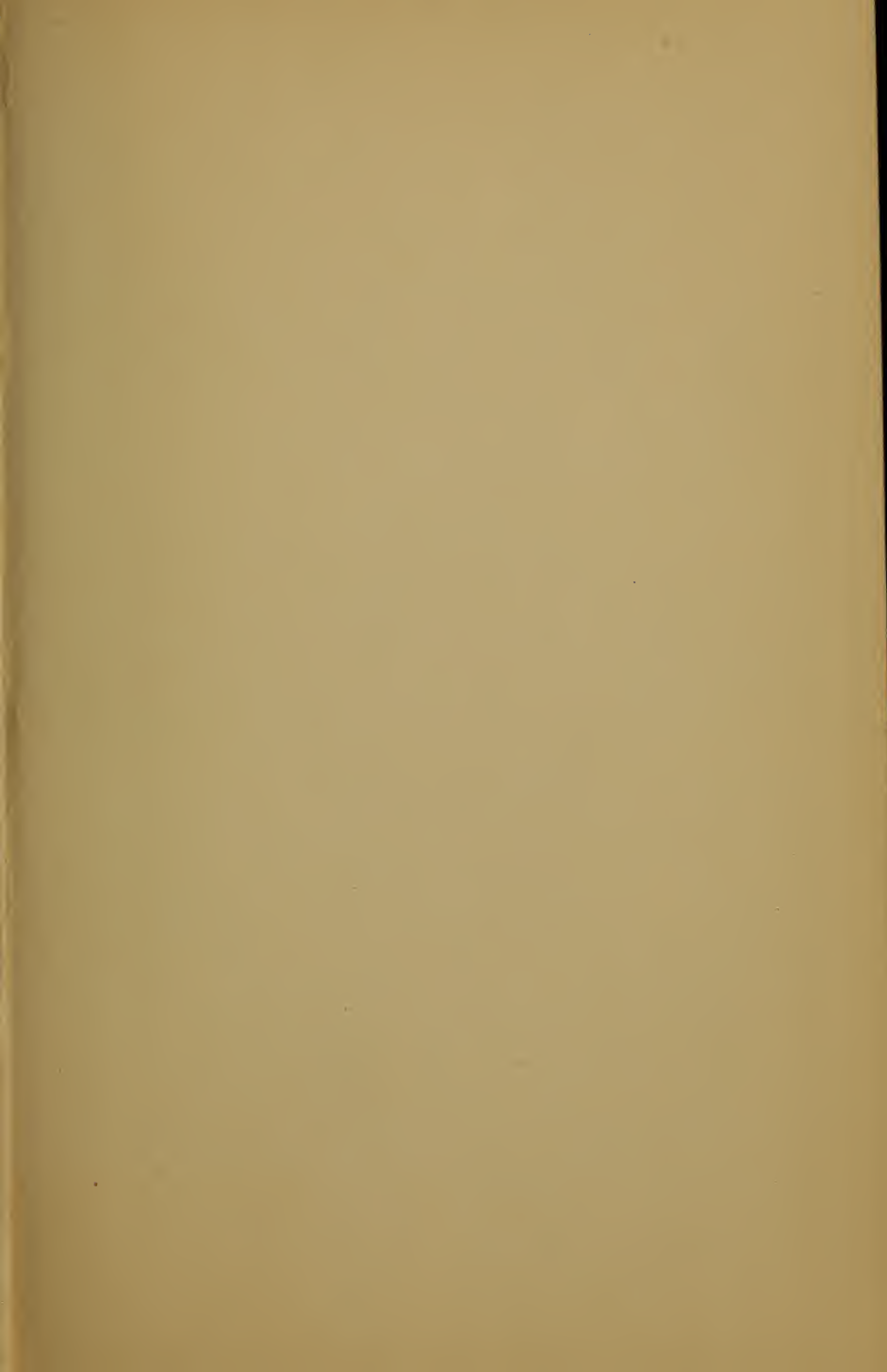
"The Freedom of Life" should be widely and thoughtfully read. — *New York Times*.

Many of the problems of home life may be solved by following the simple directions given in "Every Day Living." — *Christian Intelligencer*, New York.

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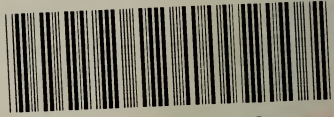


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